

FORM PTO-1390 (REV. 11-2000)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER	
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371				0152-0559P U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 CFR 1.5)	
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.		INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE		PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED	
PCT/JP99/05922		October 26, 1999		October 27, 1999	
TITLE OF INVENTION INFORMATION RECORDING METHOD AND SYSTEM IMAGE COMPRESSION/DECOMPRESSION SYSTEM, SYSTEM *					
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US KATAHIRA, Kazuhiko; TERADA, Eriko; TANAKA, Fujio; SHINOHARA, Hideki; KURAMOCHI, Katsunori					
Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:					
<p>1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.</p> <p>2. <input type="checkbox"/> This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.</p> <p>3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39 (1).</p> <p>4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The US has been elected by the expiration of 19 months from the priority date (Article 31).</p> <p>5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))</p> <p>a. <input type="checkbox"/> is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).</p> <p>b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> has been transmitted by the International Bureau. WO 00/25312</p> <p>c. <input type="checkbox"/> is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).</p> <p>6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).</p> <p>a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is transmitted herewith.</p> <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> has been previously submitted under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4)</p> <p>7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).</p> <p>a. <input type="checkbox"/> are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).</p> <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> have been transmitted by the International Bureau.</p> <p>c. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.</p> <p>d. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> have not been made and will not be made.</p> <p>8. <input type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).</p> <p>9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).</p> <p>10. <input type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the annexes of the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).</p>					
Items 11. to 20. below concern document(s) or information included:					
<p>11. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98-International Search Report (PCT/ISA/210) w/ 6 documents</p> <p>12. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.</p> <p>13. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A FIRST preliminary amendment.</p> <p>14. <input type="checkbox"/> A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.</p> <p>15. <input type="checkbox"/> A substitute specification.</p> <p>16. <input type="checkbox"/> A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.</p> <p>17. <input type="checkbox"/> A computer-readable form of the sequence listing in accordance with PCT Rule 13ter.2 and 35 U.S.C. 1.821-1.825.</p> <p>18. <input type="checkbox"/> A second copy of the published international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).</p> <p>19. <input type="checkbox"/> A second copy of the English language translation of the international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).</p> <p>20. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other items or information:</p> <p>1.) PCT Substitute Claims Letter w/ International Preliminary Examination Report (PCT/IPEA/409) and amendments</p> <p>2.) Thirteen (13) sheets of Formal Claims</p>					
*CONTROL METHOD, AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM INCLUDING PART OR ALL OF THEM					

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (if known, see 37 CFR 1.3)		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER	
09w 830417		PCT/JP99/05922		0152-0559P	
21. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted: BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5): Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO. \$1,000.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO. \$860.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO. \$710.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4). \$690.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4). \$100.00 ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =				CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY	
				\$ 860.00	
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).				\$ 0	
#	CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE	
Total Claims	53 - 20 =	33	X	\$18.00	\$ 594.00
Independent Claims	19 - 3 =	16	X	\$80.00	\$ 1280.00
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable) Yes				+	\$270.00
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =					\$ 3004.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27. The fees indicated above are reduced by 1/2.					\$ 0
SUBTOTAL =					\$ 3004.00
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).					\$ 0
TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =					\$ 3004.00
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property +					\$ 40.00
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =					\$ 3044.00
				Amount to be:	\$
				refunded	\$
				charged	\$

a. ☒ A check in the amount of \$ 3044.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.

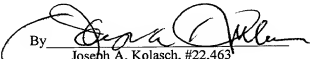
b. ☐ Please charge my Deposit Account. No. _____ in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the above fees.
A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

c. ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any
overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

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Date: April 27, 2001

By 
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PATENT
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IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: KATAHIRA, Kazuhiko et al. Conf.:
Int'l. Appl. No.: PCT/JP99/05922
Appl. No.: New Group:
Filed: April 27, 2001 Examiner:
For: INFORMATION RECORDING METHOD AND SYSTEM IMAGE
COMPRESSION/DECOMPRESSION SYSTEM, SYSTEM
CONTROL METHOD, AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM
INCLUDING PART OR ALL OF THEM

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

BOX PATENT APPLICATION

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

April 27, 2001

Sir:

The following Preliminary Amendments and Remarks are respectfully submitted in connection with the above-identified application.

AMENDMENTS

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Before line 1, insert --This application is the national phase under 35 U.S.C. § 371 of PCT International Application No. PCT/JP99/05922 which has an International filing date of October 26, 1999, which designated the United States of America and was published in Japanese.

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REMARKS

The specification has been amended to provide a cross-reference to the previously filed International Application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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(Rev. 02/12/01)

DESCRIPTION

INFORMATION RECORDING METHOD AND SYSTEM, IMAGE
COMPRESSION/DECOMPRESSION SYSTEM, SYSTEM CONTROL METHOD,
AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM INCLUDING PART OR ALL OF THEM

TECHNICAL FIELD

- 5 The present invention relates to an
information recording method, an information recording
system, an image compression/decompression system, a
system control method, and a surveillance system
including part or all of them.
- 10 Specifically, the present invention first
relates to an information recording method, an
information recording system, and in particular, to a
method of and a system for recording digital signals in
a continuous way, an intermittent way, and/or a time-
- 15 sequence way. For example, the present invention
relates to a control operation in a case in which while
a large amount of data is being received at a fixed
transfer rate, the data is continuously recorded in
removable recording medium without interrupting a flow
- 20 of the data. The information recording method and the
information recording system according to the present
invention are particularly suitable for a surveillance
system in which predetermined places are continuously
monitored by surveillance video cameras and digital

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image signals resultantly produced by the surveillance video cameras are recorded in a storage.

Additionally, the present invention relates to image compression and decompression to transfer data at a high speed, and in particular, to image compression and decompression using a joint photographic experts group (JPEG) compression/decompression algorithm. The image compression/decompression system of the present invention is particularly suitable for data compression and decompression or defrosting in a situation in which information items/item of a photo shot by a camera with high resolution, an animation, letters of printing types, an image with high contrast such as a test pattern used before an actual television program, and/or an image containing abrupt changes in its contour are/is recorded in an external recording unit such as a magneto-optical (MO) disk are/is transferred via the internet or a leased line to another system at a remote place. Therefore, the image compression/decompression system of the present invention is also applicable to the surveillance system.

Furthermore, the present invention relates to a system control method and, in particular, to an automatic setting and update method for system parameters and control programs in the surveillance system.

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BACKGROUND ART

There has been broadly used a surveillance system in which an alarm signal and image information sent from video cameras (surveillance cameras) arranged
5 for crime prevention in a bank, a convenience store, a department store, and the like are received and are recorded in a facility installed in a security guaranteeing center at a remote location. Heretofore, there has been widely used a time lapse video tape
10 recorder (VTR) to record analog data outputted from surveillance cameras. However, the recent surveillance system has a tendency to adopt, in place of the time lapse VTR, a surveillance camera digital recording/replay unit in which digital image data of an
15 object shot by the surveillance camera is directly recorded as digital data. The surveillance camera digital recording/replay unit has a feature that the unit is superior, in the keeping and editing of high-quality images without deterioration of the quality
20 with lapse of time, to the time lapse VTR of the prior art.

To transfer digital image data at a high speed, the prior art has typically proposed a JPEG compression/decompression algorithm. The JPEG
25 compression/decompression algorithm conducting a sequential discrete cosine transformer (DCT) operation is based on ISO/IEC10918-1 (JPEG standard), and is an

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algorithm which converts (compresses) still picture data into a smaller amount of data and which restores (defrosts or decompresses) the data into the original image data. The algorithm makes it possible to
5 transfer a large amount of images in general at a high speed.

In the sequential DCT operation, a point of image data and another point quite near the point are assumed to be equal or similar in data to each other.
10 By achieving a Fourier transform for a scalar quantity of a point of an image to convert the scalar quantity into a power spectrum along a frequency axis, any power spectrum at a frequency equal to or more than a particular frequency can be regarded as zero. By
15 regarding the spectrum as zero, particular data is removed, which corresponds to "compression". Therefore, when a data string compressed by the sequential DCT operation is expanded, the original image is not completely replayed, that is, the
20 decompressed data includes a loss.

In some surveillance systems, it is required to record all information sent from surveillance cameras continuously, for example, 24 hours per day and 365 days per year. Recently, removable recording
25 medium such as a magneto-optical disk has been generally employed as a recording medium for a surveillance system because of its portability and large capacity (e.g., of 640 megabytes). For example, by replacing a

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disk in such a surveillance system, it is theoretically possible to record an infinite data capacity.

However, in the disk replacement, even if the operator rapidly conducts the replacement, the continuous recording is interrupted for a period of time of the replacement. Therefore, in a surveillance system employing only one magneto-optical disk drive, an event in which important information to identify a suspicious person is not recorded may possibly take place. In this situation, to prevent an event in which potentially important information is not recorded even for a short period of time, two magneto-optical disk drives and a switching circuit are ordinarily arranged in the surveillance system of the prior art. The switching circuit first connects input image information to a first magneto-optical disk drive to record image data on a magneto-optical, activates a second magneto-optical disk drive immediately before the recording capacity of the magneto-optical disk of the first magneto-optical disk drive is used up, and then changes the input image data to the second magneto-optical disk drive to record succeeding image data on a second magneto-optical disk. Moreover, while the second magneto-optical disk drive is recording image data, the magneto-optical disk in the first magneto-optical disk drive is replaced with a new magneto-optical disk, and the processing is repeatedly executed. As above, by employing two magneto-optical

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disk drives, the surveillance system of the prior art prevents interruption of the continuous recording.

DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

- However, the surveillance camera digital
- 5 recording and replay unit has a larger number of environment setting items than the time lapse VTR of the prior art. That is, the digital recording and replay unit has various system parameters (i.e., system operation setting items) including an image compression
- 10 ratio, a recording interval of frame, an alarm recording time, and a camera channel switching interval, and hence it is complex and troublesome to manually conduct a setting operation (setup) and an update operation (update) for the system parameters by
- 15 operating the button and the like. Particularly, in a department store using a large number of surveillance camera digital recording and replay units, it is not efficient to repeatedly conduct the same operation for all units, and setting errors may easily take place.
- 20 This also applies to control programs to control system parameters.

- Moreover, in the surveillance system aiming at the continuous recording operation using removable recording medium, there can be considered as above to
- 25 use to removable recording medium drives. However, the removable recording medium drive is in general expensive and hence installation of two removable

recording medium drives soars the cost of the surveillance system. Additionally, to install particularly two external removable recording medium drives, a large installing place must be reserved, which is inconvenient. Furthermore, when the user does not replace the magneto-optical disk, there occurs an event in which important information to identify a suspicious person or the like is not recorded. That is, when the user does not install a magneto-optical disk in the second magneto-optical disk drive before the recording capacity of the magneto-optical disk in the first magneto-optical disk drive is completely used up, image data is not recorded as a result from when the recording capacity of magneto-optical disk in the first magneto-optical disk drive is completely used up to when a magneto-optical disk is installed in the second magneto-optical disk drive. Assume, for example, that one magneto-optical disk can record 24 hours of image data. When 24 hours lapse after the recording of data on the pertinent magneto-optical disk is started, image data cannot be recorded thereon. That is, image data is not recorded until the magneto-optical disk is replaced with a new magneto-optical disk.

In addition, a certain type of loss associated with the sequential DCT operation is so conspicuous to give a sense of incongruity to eyes of a human. That is, according to the DCT operation, when a part of image data in which the differential

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coefficient abruptly changes for similarity to the Fourier transform (for example, a part of image containing letters of printing types or a part of an abrupt rising section of the differential coefficient)

5 is compressed and the compressed data is replayed to an image, a ghost image which is not actual image appears in a part of the image corresponding to the abrupt change of the differential coefficient. The ghost image is called "mosquito noise", which is a type of

10 loss in consideration of quality deterioration of the replayed image. Since occurrence of the mosquito noise is a problem unique to the JPEG compression/decompression algorithm, it may be considered to develop another algorithm. However, a

15 codec to implement the JPEG compression/decompression algorithm for the DCT operation is assumed as an inexpensive large-scale integration (LSI) circuit by many companies and firms. To change the codec or to manufacture a new LSI circuit increases the cost of the

20 entire system. To prevent the increase of the cost, it is desirable to use an LSI chip for the JPEG codec available in the market at present.

As above, the surveillance system of the prior art has not a sufficient configuration in

25 consideration of the creation, compression, decompression, and recording of image data and the system management.

It is therefore a general and exemplary

object of the present invention to provide a novel and useful continuous recording method, a novel and useful continuous recording system, a novel and useful image compression/decompression system, a novel and useful
5 system control method, and a surveillance system using the method including part or all of them to solve the problem of the prior art.

An object of the present invention is to provide a surveillance system and a surveillance method
10 capable of recording information even when the user forgets the replacing of a disk.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a surveillance system and a surveillance method capable of recording image data after a lapse of a
15 predetermined recording period of time.

Further another object of the present invention is to provide a surveillance system and a surveillance method capable of replay a image recorded in the past even during a recording operation.

20 Still another object of the present invention is to provide a surveillance system and a surveillance method capable of recording a monitor image even during a replay operation of a recorded image.

In addition, another exemplary object of the
25 present invention is to provide an information recording method and an information recording system capable of recording image data in a time zone in which image data cannot be recorded in the prior art and a

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surveillance system using the information recording method.

Furthermore, another object of the present invention is to provide an image

5 compression/decompression system in which while using a JPEG codec available at present, the mosquito noise is minimized to obtain higher picture quality as compared with the prior art and a surveillance system using the image compression/decompression system.

10 Additionally, another exemplary object of the present invention is to provide a system control method and a surveillance system using the system control method in which in the setting and update of the system parameters and the control programs, a duplicated
15 manual operation and mistakes of the user in the manual operation are prevented to construct a highly reliable system.

To achieve the object in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a continuous
20 recording system, comprising removable recording medium drive, a fixed disk unit, and a controller connected to said removable recording medium drive and said fixed disk unit, wherein said controller controls operation such that data is inputted to said removable recording
25 medium drive and is recorded in removable recording medium of said removable recording medium drive; an input of said data is changed, when said removable recording medium is replaced with a new removable

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recording medium, from said removable recording medium to said fixed disk unit and the data is recorded on a fixed disk of said fixed disk unit; and the data recorded on said fixed disk is transferred, after said
5 removable recording medium is replaced, to said new removable recording medium, thereby continuously recording the data.

Moreover, a continuous recording method in accordance with the present invention comprises the
10 first step of inputting data to removable recording medium drive and recording the data in removable recording medium of said removable recording medium drive, the second step of changing an input of the data from said removable recording medium to said fixed disk
15 unit before an available memory capacity of said removable recording medium is used up, replacing said removable recording medium; and recording the data on a fixed disk of said fixed disk unit; the third step of changing the input of the data, after said removable
20 recording medium is replaced with a new removable recording medium, from said fixed disk unit to said removable recording medium drive, recording the data in said new removable recording medium, reserving a data path from said fixed disk unit to said removable
25 recording medium drive, and copying the data recorded on said fixed disk onto said removable recording medium; and the fourth step of interrupting, after the data recorded on said fixed disk is entirely copied

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onto said removable recording medium, the data path from said fixed disk unit to said removable recording medium drive while keeping the input of data to said removable recording medium drive reserved, wherein
5 control of process is returned to said first step to repetitiously execute processing.

Furthermore, the third and fourth steps may be replaced with the third step of reserving, after said removable recording medium is replaced, a data
10 path from said fixed disk unit to said removable recording medium drive while keeping the input of data to said fixed disk unit reserved; and copying the data recorded on said fixed disk onto said removable recording medium in a time series fashion and the
15 fourth step of changing the input of the data from said fixed disk unit to said removable recording medium drive after the data recorded on said fixed disk is entirely copied onto said removable recording medium, and interrupting the data path from said fixed disk
20 unit to said removable recording medium drive. After the fourth step, control of process may be returned to the first step to repetitiously execute processing.

Additionally, a surveillance system in accordance with the present invention comprises a
25 surveillance camera, a video decoder connected to said surveillance camera, an image compressor/decompressor connected to said video decoder, a video encoder connected to said image compressor/decompressor, a

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display connected to said video encoder, and a continuous recording system connected to said image compressor/decompressor, wherein said continuous recording system comprises removable recording medium drive, a fixed disk unit connected to said removable recording medium drive, and a controller connected to said removable recording medium drive and said fixed disk unit, wherein said controller controls operation such that image data from said image compressor/decompressor is inputted to said removable recording medium drive and is recorded in removable recording medium of said removable recording medium drive; an input of said image data is changed, when said removable recording medium is replaced with a new removable recording medium, from said removable recording medium to said fixed disk unit and the image data is recorded on a fixed disk of said fixed disk unit; and the image data recorded on said fixed disk is transferred, after said removable recording medium is replaced, to said new removable recording medium, thereby continuously recording the image data.

As above, in a continuous recording method, a continuous recording system, and a surveillance system according to the present invention, there is included removable recording medium drive. Moreover, while the removable recording medium is being replaced, data is recorded on a fixed disk, and hence the continuous recording cannot be interrupted. Also, in a continuous

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recording method according to claim 3 of the present invention, data is recorded in the removable recording medium at addresses thereof in a time series fashion. Therefore, in a readout operation, only by reading data
5 therefrom in a sequential manner with respect to addresses, images can be read in a time series fashion.

To achieve the objects in accordance with the present invention, there is provided as an exemplary embodiment a digital recording method comprising the
10 step of storing digital data in a buffer at a video capturing interval equal to or less than a video recording interval set by a user and temporarily delaying the digital data and the step of recording the digital data which is stored in the buffer and which is
15 delayed thereby on a storage medium at the video recording interval set by a user. In accordance with the method, there is temporarily stored, in the buffer, the digital data at a video capturing interval equal to or less than the video recording interval set by the
20 user, and part or all of the digital data recorded in the buffer is recorded on the recording medium. Since the buffer delays the digital data, there exists a margin of time to classify and to edit the data to be recorded on the recording medium.

25 Moreover, in accordance with the present invention, there is provided as another exemplary embodiment a digital recording method comprising the step of storing digital data in a buffer at a video

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capturing interval equal to or less than a first video recording interval set by a user in a first recording mode and temporarily delaying the digital data, the step of recording the digital data which is stored in the buffer and which is delayed thereby in the first recording mode on a storage medium at the first video recording interval, the step of changing operation from the first recording mode to the second recording mode, and the step of recording the digital data stored in the buffer on the storage medium in the second recording mode, the digital data being stored before a point of time when operation is changed from the first recording mode to the second recording mode. Also the method provides the margin of time. In this method, the margin of time is used to record on the recording medium the data received before the mode change.

Additionally, in accordance with the present invention, there is provided as still another exemplary embodiment a digital recording method comprising the step of capturing digital data at a video capturing interval equal to or less than a first video recording interval set by a user in a first recording mode, conducting predetermined processing including compression for the digital data to create first compressed data, and storing the first compressed data in a buffer and temporarily delaying the first compressed data; the step of delaying by the buffer the first compressed data stored in the buffer in the first

temporarily delaying the digital data and a recording device connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller, for recording the digital data which is stored in said buffer and which is delayed thereby in the first recording mode on a storage medium at the first video recording interval, and for recording the digital data stored in the buffer on the storage medium in the second recording mode, the digital data being stored before a point of time when operation is changed from the first recording mode to the second recording mode. In accordance with to the system, there is temporarily stored, in the buffer, the digital data at a video capturing interval equal to or less than the first video recording interval set by the user, and part or all of the digital data recorded in the buffer is recorded on the recording medium. Since the buffer delays the digital data, there exists a margin of time to classify and to edit the data to be recorded on the recording medium. In this system, the margin of time is used to record on the recording medium the data received before the mode change.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided as another exemplary embodiment a digital recording system comprising a controller for changing operation from the first recording mode to the second recording mode, a compressor connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller, for conducting predetermined processing including

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compression for the digital data, for creating first compressed data in the first recording mode, and for creating second compressed data in the second recording mode, the second compressed data having an amount of

5 data larger than that of the first compressed data; a buffer controlled by said controller for storing therein the first compressed data and the second compressed data at a video capturing interval equal to or less than a first video recording interval set by a

10 user, and for temporarily delaying the digital data; and a recording device connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller and for recording the first compressed data and the second compressed data which are stored in said buffer and which are

15 delayed thereby on a storage medium. Also in the system, there exists the margin of time, and the second compressed data larger in the data quantity than the first compressed data is recorded on the recording medium in the second recording mode. The system is

20 particularly effective when the mode is changed from the first recording mode to the second recording mode at or after a point of time when importance of pertinent information is increased.

To achieve the object above in accordance

25 with the present invention, there is provided a digital recording method comprising the step of setting a first recording mode and a second recording mode, the step of conducting predetermined processing including

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compression for digital data, creating first compressed data in the first recording mode, and creating second compressed data in the second recording mode, the second compressed data having an amount of data smaller than that of the first compressed data; and the step of recording the first compressed data on a recording medium in the first recording mode and recording the second compressed data on a recording medium in the second recording mode.

10 Additionally, in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a digital recording method comprising the step of compressing digital data representing an image to create compressed data, the step of recording the compressed data on a recording medium, and the step of changing an amount of data of the digital data per unitary time during said recording step. The quantity of data can be changed by thinning out a predetermined quantity of data from the digital data (for example, when the digital data represents picture, the number of recording frames per unitary time is lowered or data per pixel is reduced).

20 Furthermore, in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a digital recording method comprising the step of compressing digital data to create compressed data, the step of recording the compressed data on a recording medium, and the step of changing a compression ratio to be used in the compression of the digital data during said recording

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step. The recording method can be applied to a case in which three or more compression ratios are used for the compression ratio change. Favorably, said changing step includes changing the compression ratio before
5 compression to a compression ratio after compression, the compression ratio after compression being less than the compression ratio before compression.

Moreover, in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a digital recording system
10 comprising a controller capable of setting a first recording mode and a second recording mode, a compressor connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller, for conducting predetermined processing including compression for
15 digital data, for creating first compressed data in the first recording mode, and for creating second compressed data in the second recording mode, the second compressed data having an amount of data smaller than that of the first compressed data; and a recording
20 device connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller, for recording the first compressed data on a recording medium in the first recording mode, and for recording the second compressed data on a recording medium in the second recording
25 mode.

The controller changes the mode from the first recording mode to the second recording mode according to, for example, a remaining quantity of

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recording medium in the second recording mode. In the same way as for the digital recording system described above, the second compressed data may be created using the digital data thus thinned out or may be created at a compression ratio higher than that used in the first recording mode. In addition, to thin out the digital data, the surveillance system may use a capturing command, a readout command, and the like from the controller.

- 10 According to the digital recording method, the digital recording system, and the surveillance system, the second compressed data with a quantity of data less than that of the first compressed data is recorded on the recording medium in the second mode.
- 15 Therefore, the period of time to record data on the recording medium is elongated by using the second recording mode when compared with the case in which only the first recording mode is used. Additionally, in the digital recording method, while the compressed
- 20 data of the digital data is being recorded on the recording medium, the digital data can be thinned out or the compression ratio can be changed.

- 25 To achieve the objects above in accordance with the present invention, there is provided an image compression/decompression system comprising a detecting circuit for subdividing first image information into areas each of which has a predetermined size and for detecting a maximum value of an image change rate per

unitary distance for each of the areas, a lowpass filter for conducting predetermined filter processing for the first image information in the area having the maximum value equal to or more than a threshold value;

5 and a JPEG codec for compressing second image information including the first image information in the area having the maximum value less than the threshold value and the first image information passed said lowpass filter, by conducting a DCT operation for

10 the second image information.

Moreover, in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a surveillance system comprising a surveillance camera, a video decoder connected to said surveillance camera, an image

15 compression/decompression system connected to said video decoder, a video encoder connected to said image compression/decompression system, and a display connected to said video encoder, wherein said image compression/decompression system comprises an input

20 filter connected to said video decoder, a JPEG codec connected to said input filter, and a JPEG filter processor connected to said input filter and said JPEG codec, said input filter includes a detecting circuit for subdividing first image information into areas each

25 of which has a predetermined size and for detecting a maximum value of an image change rate per unitary distance for each of the areas and a lowpass filter for conducting predetermined filter processing for the

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- first image information in the area having the maximum value equal to or more than a threshold value, said JPEG codec compresses second image information including the first image information in the area
- 5 having the maximum value less than the threshold value and the first image information passed said lowpass filter, by conducting a DCT operation for the second image information, and said JPEG file processor writes, in a comment marker, file data including identifier
- 10 information of the area having the maximum value equal to or more than the threshold value, differential information between the maximum value and the threshold value, and the threshold value information, and thereby creates a JPEG file together with a compressed data
- 15 string outputted from said JPEG codec.

According to the image compression/decompression system and the surveillance system in accordance with the present invention, the detector circuit and the lowpass filter operate, in an

20 area with a high image change rate, to lower the image change rate. Therefore, when a JPEG file created using the second image is decompressed, the mosquito noise can be more suppressed when compared with the case in which a JPEG file created using the first image as in

25 the prior art is decompressed. Moreover, according to the present invention, the JPEG codec of the prior art available in the market can be directly used.

Favorably, a JPEG file processor is disposed

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to write file data in a comment marker of the JPEG file. More favorably, a filter data analyzing circuit and a peaking filter are disposed to restore the filter processing conducted by the lowpass filter, and hence
5 the original image can be replayed with higher fidelity. The detection circuit, the lowpass filter, the file data analyzing circuit, and the peaking filter can be configured as one digital signal processor.

To achieve the objects above in accordance
10 with the present invention, there is provided an automatic setting and update method for system parameters of a surveillance system comprising the step of making a check to determine whether or not there exists a first system parameter currently being used in
15 the surveillance system and whether or not a second system parameter to be introduced to the surveillance system is younger than the first system parameter, the step of automatically setting, when it is determined that the first system parameter does not exist in the
20 surveillance system, the second system parameter to the surveillance system by copying the second system parameter thereonto, the step of automatically updating, when it is determined that the first system parameter exists in the surveillance system and the
25 second system parameter is younger than the first system parameter, the first system parameter to the second system parameter; and the step of keeping the first system parameter when it is determined that the

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first system parameter exists in the surveillance system and the first system parameter has a creation day equal to or younger than a creation day of the second system parameter. According to the method, the

5 system parameters are automatically set and updated after predetermined determination.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided an automatic setting and update method for control programs of a surveillance system

10 comprising the step of making a check to determine whether or not there exists a first control program currently being used in the surveillance system and whether or not a second control program to be introduced to the surveillance system is younger than

15 the first control program, the step of automatically setting, when it is determined that the first control program does not exist in the surveillance system, the second control program to the surveillance system by copying the second control program thereonto, the step

20 of automatically updating, when it is determined that the first control program exists in the surveillance system and the second control program is younger than the first control program, the first control program to the second control program, and the step of keeping the

25 first control program when it is determined that the first control program exists in the surveillance system and the first control program has a creation day equal to or younger than a creation day of the second control

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program. According to the method, the control program is automatically set and updated after predetermined determination.

Furthermore, in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a surveillance system comprising a surveillance camera for shooting an object and for outputting an electric analog signal, a converter section for converting the electric analog signal into a digital signal, and a controller for recording and editing the digital signal, wherein said controller comprises a storage for storing therein system parameters for setting an operation environment of said surveillance system and control programs for controlling said respective sections of said surveillance system and a controlling section for controlling automatic setting and update of the system parameters and the control programs. According to the surveillance system, the controlling section controls the automatic setting and update of the system parameters and control programs.

The objects and features of the present invention will become more apparent from the description explained by referring to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a schematic block diagram of a surveillance system of the present invention;

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Fig. 2 is a block diagram showing a main section of an image compression/decompression system in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention applicable to the surveillance system shown in Fig. 1;

5 Fig. 3 is a block diagram showing an exemplary configuration of an adaptive input digital filter of the image compression/decompression system shown in Fig. 2;

10 Fig. 4 is a block diagram showing an exemplary configuration of JPEG file processor of the image compression/decompression system shown in Fig. 2;

15 Fig. 5 is a block diagram showing an exemplary configuration of an adaptive output digital filter of the image compression/decompression system shown in Fig. 2;

Fig. 6 is a timing chart for exemplarily explaining a relationship between an acquiring command and image data in a recording method of the present invention;

20 Fig. 7 is a flowchart showing an example of a control method achieved by a CPU shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 8 is a flowchart for explaining a recording method that can be executed by the surveillance system shown in Fig. 1;

25 Fig. 9 is a flowchart of an ordinary extended recording mode shown in Fig. 8;

Fig. 10 is a flowchart of a detailed recording mode shown in Fig. 8;

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Fig. 11 is an exemplary timing chart for explaining effect of a recording method that can be executed by the surveillance system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 12 is an example of a flowchart
5 regarding a continuous recording operation that can be executed by the surveillance system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 13 is another example of a flowchart regarding a continuous recording operation which can be executed by the surveillance system shown in Fig. 1;

10 Fig. 14 is a schematic block diagram for explaining an automatic setting and update method for system parameters and control programs in a surveillance system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 15 is a flowchart showing an example of
15 an automatic setting and update method for system parameters conducted by the CPU of the surveillance system shown in Fig. 1; and

Fig. 16 is a flowchart showing an example of an automatic setting and update method for control
20 programs conducted by the CPU of the surveillance system shown in Fig. 1.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

Referring next to accompanying drawings, description will be given of a surveillance system 100
25 as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. In this connection, in respective drawings, it is assumed that the members or steps assigned with the

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same reference numerals represent the same members or steps, and description will not be duplicated given thereof. Incidentally, Fig. 1 is a general block diagram of a surveillance system as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

As shown in Fig. 1, the surveillance system 100 includes a plurality of surveillance video cameras (surveillance cameras) 10, an alarm 12, a selector 14, a video decoder 16, an input/output filter 20, a JPEG 10 codec 50, a frame buffer 58, a controller 60, a magnetooptical (MO) disk drive (removable disk drive) 80, a hard disk drive (fixed disk drive) 82, and a monitor 84.

I Video camera 10, alarm 12, and selector 14

15 The video camera 10 and the alarm 12 are arranged in a department store, a convenience store, a bank, a museum, and the like, and in the configuration, the alarm 12 is connected to a sensor (not shown) such as an infrared ray sensor, a voice sensor, or the like 20 disposed on a door or the like such that when the sensor senses a suspicious person, a switch of the alarm 12 is turned on. The surveillance camera 10 can be materialized, for example, as a charge coupled device (CCD) camera to converter an image of object 25 shot by the camera into an analog electric signal. In the embodiment, only one alarm 12 is disposed commonly for a plurality of sensors, however, the alarms may be

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selectively disposed or one alarm may be disposed for each sensor.

Information from the video cameras 10 and alarm 12 is sent via communication lines to a guardroom in the premises where the video cameras 10 and alarm 12 are installed or to a security guaranteeing company at a remote place. In the guardroom or the security guaranteeing company, there are disposed the selector 14, the video decoder 16, the video encoder 18, the input/output filter 20, the JPEG codec 50, the controller 60, the magneto-optical disk drive 80, and the hard disk drive 82. These components may be considered as one digital video recording device. However, when the controller 60 is configured as a general personal computer and the magneto-optical disk drive 80 and the hard disk drive 82 are configured as a magneto-optical disk drive and a hard disk drive which respectively are integrally constructed in the personal computer, the system can be configured as one personal computer. Naturally, the controller 60 may integrally include either one thereof.

The selector 14 can extract, from the analog signals generated by the shooting operation of the surveillance cameras 10, only a signal component of one of the cameras 10 and only a signal component necessary for the recording operation from the signal component of the camera.

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II Input/output filter 20

The input/output filter 20 removes noise of a propagation path and includes an input filter 30 and an output filter 40. Although the input/output filter 20 is favorably configured as an adaptive input/output digital filter, either one or both of the input and output filters may be configured as a general filter in the present invention. However, in the description below, the input filter 30 is configured as an adaptive input digital filter to receive input image information to be compressed and the output filter 40 is configured as an adaptive output digital filter to produce output image information.

II-1 Image compression/decompression system

Next, connection between the input/output filter 20 and the JPEG codec 50 will be described in detail by referring to Fig. 2. In this regard, Fig. 2 is a block diagram showing a main section of an image compression/decompression system 110 as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. As shown in Fig. 2, the image compression/decompression system 110 includes an input filter 30, a JPEG codec 50, a JPEG file processor 120, and an output filter 40. Additionally, the JPEG file processor 120 is connected to an external storage 130. The JPEG codec 50 is connected to a frame buffer 58. Incidentally, in implementation of an actual circuit, the adaptive input

digital filter 30 and the adaptive output digital filter 40 can be integrally configured, for example, in one digital signal processor (DSP) customized for filter calculation. The JPEG file processor can be implemented by use of a control program stored in a second memory 74 such as a read-only memory (ROM) of or a hard disk 83 of the controller 60. Moreover, although the external storage 130 is a magneto-optical disk drive 80 in Fig. 1, the storage 130 is not restricted by this embodiment but includes any other external storage (such as a DVD drive, a CD-RW drive, or the like).

II-2 Adaptive input digital filter 30

As shown in Fig. 3, the adaptive input digital filter 30 includes a differential coefficient detecting circuit 32, a subtractor 34, a lowpass filter 36, and a switching circuit 38. In this regard, Fig. 3 is a schematic block diagram showing an exemplary configuration of the adaptive input digital filter 30. The filter 30 generates filter data and image data and outputs the filter data to the JPEG file processor 120 and the image data to the JPEG codec 50. The file data is finally written in a comment marker of the JPEG file, which will be described later. The image data is finally generated as a compressed data string of the JPEG file.

The adaptive input digital filter 30 has a

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The subtractor 34 includes two inputs and one output. One of the inputs is supplied with an output from the differential coefficient detector 32, i.e., a differential coefficient D_i (i is a block number) of an objective block of the input image information. The other one of the inputs is supplied with a preset threshold value D_s . For the subtractor 34, any such a circuit well known in the pertinent technical field can be used. The subtractor 34 produces an output which is fed as filter data to the JPEG file processor 120 and to the lowpass filter 36.

The lowpass filter 36 can receive input image
25 information, however, operation thereof is controlled
by the output from the subtractor 34. In other words,
to set the maximum value of the differential
coefficient D_i of the image information to D_s , the

lowpass filter 36 changes a filter coefficient according to the output ($D_i - D_s$) from the subtractor 34. Therefore, when $D_i - D_s$ is a large value, the lowpass filter 36 increases the filter coefficient, and
5 when $D_i - D_s$ is a small value, the lowpass filter 36 decreases the filter coefficient.

The switching circuit 3 includes a control section, not shown. The control section conducts a switching control operation by receiving information
10 from the differential coefficient detector 32. That is, for a block B_i (i is a block number) having a differential coefficient D_i larger than the threshold value D_s , the control section allows the block to pass through the lowpass filter 36. For any block B_j ($j \neq$
15 i ; j is a block number) not equivalent to the block B_i , the control section does not allow the block to pass through the lowpass filter 36.

Consequently, when the threshold value D_s is set to a sufficiently large value, no block B_i passes
20 the lowpass filter 36 in the image compression/decompression system 110. This leads to an advantage substantially equal to the advantage of the configuration in which the adaptive input digital filter 30 is not disposed as in the prior art. On the
25 other hand, as the threshold value D_s becomes smaller, occurrence of the mosquito noise can be more efficiently suppressed. However, this increases the loss of high-frequency components and hence in a

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replayed image, a sharp contour cannot be obtained, namely, the contour becomes obscure. In consideration of this point, the image compression/decompression system 110 of the embodiment determines an optimal value of D_s by simulation for each objective image.

II-3 JPEG codec 50 and frame buffer 58

The JPEG codec 50 sends image data as a JPEG file via a PCI bus 62 to a magneto-optical disk drive 80 and/or the hard disk drive 82, which will be described later. However, it is assumed in the description below that the JPEG codec 50 transmits the JPEG file to the magneto-optical disk drive 80. When the JPEG codec 50 supplies output data to the hard disk drive 82, it is only necessary to replace the magneto-optical disk drive 80 with the hard disk drive 82 in the description. The recording method as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention will be described as part of operation of the surveillance system.

The JPEG codec 50 uses a JPEG compression/decompression algorithm to conduct a sequential discrete cosine transformer (DCT) operation and a Huffman coding/decoding operation. The JPEG compression/decompression algorithm is well known in the pertinent technical field as an algorithm which is based on ISO/IEC10918-1 (JPEG standard) and which converts (compresses) still picture data into a smaller amount of data and which restores (defrosts or

decompresses) the data into the original image data. The JPEG compression/decompression algorithm uses a compression/decompression ratio set by a control program stored in a second memory 74, which will be described later, or a compression/decompression specified by the user. The JPEG codec 20 can be configured using, for example, MD2310 of Fuji Film Microdevice. As above, according to the present invention, an LSI chip for any JPEG codec generally used in the pertinent technical field at present can be directly used without changing specifications thereof. Additionally, the JPEG codec 50 has a function to control the frame buffer 58.

Some JPEG codecs available in the market can recognize a comment marker. However, the JPEG file processor 120 of the image compression/decompression system 110 of the present invention extracts comment marker information and sends a JPEG file not containing information described in the comment marker to the JPEG codec 50, which will be described later. Therefore, in short, regardless of the function to recognize the comment marker, a JPEG coded available in the market can be used as the JPEG codec 50 of the image compression/decompression system 110 of the present invention. As above, it is not necessary to modify or to fabricate the LSI chip for the JPEG codec, the cost of the system 110 is not increased.

Typically, the JPEG codec 50 includes a DCT

section 52 and a Hoffman coder/encoder 54 as shown in Fig. 2 and can compress input image information and can decompress compressed data. The DCT section 52 receives image data from the adaptive input digital filter 30 and conducts a DCT operation for each block thereof. The Hoffman coder/encoder 54 represents data resultant from the DCT operation using a possibly small number of bits. This results in creation of compressed data. The compressed data produced at this point does not contain information indicating how the filtering is conducted for each block by the lowpass filter 36. The compressed data string is transmitted to the JPEG file processor 120.

On the other hand, in the data decompression, the JPEG codec 50 receives from the JPEG file processor 120 a JPEG file from which information of a comment marker has been extracted and removed, decompresses the JPEG file, and outputs a result of the decompression to the adaptive output digital filter 40, which will be described later.

When the monitor 84 is subdivided into a plurality of screens to display picture therein, the frame buffer 58 may be replaced with a strip buffer (a memory to store eight lines of image data). Although the frame buffer 58 has several other functions, the frame buffer 58 in relation to the recording method of the present invention is a unit in which digital image data is temporarily stored and from which the data is

read by the JPEG codec 50 thereafter.

II-4 JPEG file processor 120 and external storage 130

The JPEG file processor 120 includes a marker
analyzing section 122 as shown in Fig. 4. The marker
5 analyzer 122 has a function to receive, in image
information compression, filter data from the adaptive
input digital filter 30 and a compressed data string
from the JPEG codec 50 so as to create a JPEG file. In
this regard, Fig. 4 is a general block diagram showing
10 an exemplary configuration of the JPEG file processor
120. The marker analyzer 122 can communicate with the
external storage 130 and can communicate a JPEG file
via a communication facility such as a communication
line with another system at a remote location.
15 Moreover, in JPEG file decompression, the marker
analyzer 122 analyzes a comment marker of the received
JPEG file, extracts information thereof to create file
data, sends the JPEG file from which the comment marker
information has been removed to the JPEG codec 50, and
20 transmits the file data to the adaptive output digital
filter 40.

The JPEG file includes a compressed data
string undergone the Hoffman coding and a marker in
which an attribute of the compressed data string and
25 information necessary for decompression thereof are
described. The is one of various kinds of markers such
as an SOI marker, an EOI marker, and RSTm marker, a

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5 marker, an application (APPn) marker, and an image line
number definition (DNL) marker. Each marker is
assigned with information unique thereto stipulated by
ISO/IEC10918-1.

Of the markers, the comment marker is accessed by the JPEG file processor 120 to write therein information indicating how the filtering is conducted for which one of the blocks by the lowpass filter 36. Furthermore, of the markers, the quantization table definition (DQT) marker is used to described therein a compression ratio. Therefore, when a magneto-optical disk 81 on which such a JPEG file is recorded is used in a magneto-optical disk drive of another system, the JPEG codec of the system can recognize the decompression ratio using the quantization table definition (DQT) marker.

In the comment marker, identifier information of the comment marker is written in two leading bytes and information of the number of bytes thereof is written in two succeeding bytes. According to the

25 ISO/IEC10918-1, the comment marker can be freely set by the user. Ordinarily, a name of product, a name of company, and other comment are written in the comment marker.

In this embodiment, the filter data format added to the comment marker is as follows. Therefore, when a name of product is beforehand written therein, the format is added thereto following the name of product. In this regard, the data is written in the byte unit, and each data ranges from 0 to 255.

First, data of the threshold value D_s is written. Thereafter, for each block which passes the lowpass filter 36, one set of three-byte data is repeatedly written as follows.

Block address x-coordinate value	1 byte
Block address y-coordinate value	1 byte
Differential data for maximum change rate	1 byte

For example, for an image having a size of 640 pixels x 480 pixels, blocks are arranged in a matrix including $640/8 = 80$ horizontal blocks x $480/8 = 60$ vertical blocks. To $80 \times 60 = 4800$ blocks, block addresses are assigned. In the image, the upper-left corner is assumed as an origin, and the x coordinate value increases toward the right direction and the y coordinate value increases toward the downward direction. For example, (0,0) is a block address indicating a block at the upper-left corner and (10,12) is a block address indicating a block at a position represented by a combination of the 11th block from the left end and 13th block from the upper end.

assuming that file data exists as first data in the comment marker, and if the addition of data items of the respective bytes results in zero, the processor 120 recognizes that the data is filter data. Additionally, 5 if any other data exists thereafter, the processor 120 recognizes the data as a comment. Moreover, if the result of the addition is other than zero, the processor 120 assumes that the data includes simply comment data and does not include any filter data.

10 When the JPEG file processor 120 writes the necessary information in the comment marker as above, there is completely formed a JPEG file containing a marker including the comment marker and a compressed data string representing image data. Since JPEG file 15 processor 120 of the present invention does not change the compressed data string, compatibility can be retained for the JPEG file which can be treated by a JPEG codec (and a JPEG decompressor) of the prior art.

 The JPEG file processor 120 can store the 20 completed JPEG file in the external storage 130 (including a removal memory, e.g., a magneto-optical disk). Or, when the JPEG file processor 120 is configured as the controller, the JPEG file processor 120 can store the completed JPEG file in the hard disk 25 drive 82 of the controller 60. Additionally, the JPEG file processor 120 can also transfer the JPEG file via a communication device such as a modem, not shown, to another computer. The JPEG file is compressed by the

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JPEG codec 50 and hence can be transferred at a speed higher than a transfer speed at which original image information is directly transferred.

II-5 Adaptive output digital filter 40

- 5 The adaptive output digital filter 40 includes a filter data analyzing circuit 42, an adder 44, a peaking filter 46, and a switching circuit 48 as shown in Fig. 5. In this connection, Fig. 5 is a general block diagram showing an exemplary
- 10 configuration of the adaptive output digital filter 40. The filter 40 receives filter data from the JPEG file processor 120 and image data including data obtained by decompressing the compressed data string from the JPEG codec 50 and then resultantly outputs image
- 15 information. The image information is used thereafter to replay an image. The digital filter 40 has a function which allows a block having passed the lowpass filter 36 to pass the peaking filter 46 to conduct a filter operation according to the filter data.
- 20 Moreover, the digital filter 40 has a function to directly output therefrom a block not having passed the lowpass filter 36.

The image compression/decompression system 110 as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention

25 favorably includes the adaptive output digital filter 40. However, even when the system 110 does not include the output filter 40, the system brings about an

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advantage to minimize the mosquito noise more efficiently when compared with the circuit configuration including only the JPEG codec of the prior art for the following reason. That is, the

5 lowpass filter 36 has already minimized the mosquito noise, and the peaking filter 46 is disposed to restore an obscured contour of the image caused by the lowpass filter 36. However, the obscured contour of the image is less effective for a sense of incongruity as

10 compared with the mosquito noise. Therefore, also the image compression/decompression system 110 not including the output filter 40 sufficiently has an advantage of the present invention. It is to be understood that such an advantage becomes an issue, for

15 example, in a case in which a JPEG file created by the image compression/decompression system 110 of the present invention is transferred to a system of the prior art including only a JPEG codec and is replayed by the system of the prior art.

20 The filter data analyzer 42 recognizes a block having passed the lowpass filter 36, a threshold value, D_s , and difference between a differential coefficient D_i of the block B_i and the threshold value D_s . The analyzer 42 sends information of B_i to the

25 switching circuit 48 and information of the difference to the adder 44.

 The adder 44 adds D_s to the difference received from the analyzer 42 to replay D_i and then

transmits resultant information to the peaking filter 46. The threshold value D_s used by the adder 44 is not necessarily equal to D_s stored in the input filter 30 depending on cases, which will be described later.

5 The peaking filter 46 receives expanded image data from the JPEG codec 50, and operation of the filter 46 is controlled by the output from the adder 44. In other words, to replay an original image through a filter operation reverse to that of the

10 lowpass filter 36, the peaking filter 46 changes its filter coefficient according to the output D_i from the adder 44. Therefore, when D_i takes a large value, the peaking filter 46 makes the filter coefficient smaller, and when D_i takes a small value, the peaking filter 46

15 makes the filter coefficient greater. As above, the peaking filter removes the problem of the obscured contour of the image caused by the lowpass filter 36, and hence it is possible to replay an image with higher fidelity to the original image.

20 The switching circuit 48 includes a control section, not shown. The control section receives a result from the filter data analyzer 42 to conduct a switching control operation in which a block B_i (i is a block number) having a differential coefficient D_i

25 larger than the threshold value D_s is allowed to pass the peaking filter 46 and a block H_j ($j \neq i$; j is a block number) not equivalent to B_i is not allowed to pass the peaking filter 46.

II-6 Image compression/decompression system 110

Operation of the image

compression/decompression system 110 will be described later in conjunction with the surveillance system 100

5 of the present invention which is described by referring to Fig. 1. In Fig. 1, the age compression/decompression system 110 is materialized as part of the monitory system 100. In consideration of minimization of the cost and the number of parts, the
10 adaptive input digital filter 30 and the adaptive output digital filter 40 are collectively configured as one DSP 20, and the JPEG file processor 120 is configured using a control program stored in the second memory 74 of the controller 60. The control program
15 also controls other respective components connected to the controller 60.

III Controller 60

The controller 60 includes a PCI bus 62 as an extended substrate, a first interface 64, a second
20 interface 68, a CPU 70, a first memory 72, a second memory 74, a switching circuit 75, a communication unit 76, and a clock 78. In this connection, in an actual circuit, a bridge circuit is inserted as an interface between the CPU 70 and the PCI bus 62.

25 The PCI bus 62 is connected to the first, second, and third interfaces 64, 66, and 68, the JPEG

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codec 50, the first memory 72, the second memory 74, the switching circuit 75, and the communication unit 76. Incidentally, in addition to or in place of the PCI bus 62, there may be disposed another bus such as an

5 USB bus or an industry standard architecture (ISA). The first interface 64 communicates with the alarm 12. The second interface 66 communicates with the magnetooptical disk drive 80 and may include, for example, a small computer systems interface (SCSI).

10 The third interface 68 communicates with the hard disk drive 82 and may include, for example, an integrated drive electronics (IDE) interface. Any configurations well known in the pertinent technical field can be applied to the interfaces 64, 66, and 68, and detailed

15 description thereof will be avoided in this paragraph. Incidentally, the magnetooptical disk drive 80 may be replaced with any types of removable recording medium drive (e.g., a compact disk (CD) - RW drive and a super disk drive).

20 The CPU 70, the first and second memories 72 and 74, and the clock 78 are used to execute a recording method as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, which will be described later. The first and second memories 72 and 74 may be considered

25 as one main memory.

The first memory 72 includes, for example, a volatile memory such as a dynamic random access memory (DRAM) or a static RAM (SRAM). Loaded in the first

memory 72 is a control program stored on the hard disk 83 and/or the second memory 74. Moreover, in the first memory 72, a compressed data string sent from the JPEG codec 50 and/or a JPEG file converted by the CPU 70 can be temporarily stored.

The second memory 74 stores therein control programs (application programs) to control respective sections and includes, for example, flash ROM having stored necessary basic input output system (BIOS) data. Alternatively, the second memory 74 may be part of the hard disk 83 of the hard disk drive 82. More concretely, the control programs include a hard logic control part to control the JPEG codec 50 and the like, a user interface part, a disk access part, and the like. The application programs to implement the recording method as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention can be created using any known developing tools such as Visual C++ and Borland C++, and hence detailed description thereof will be avoided in this paragraph.

The CPU 70 controls the respective sections according to system parameters and control programs, which will be described later. Furthermore, the CPU 70 is simply an example of a controller including a micro-processing unit (MPU) and the like.

The switching circuit 75 determines that the compressed data string from the JPEG codec 50 is supplied to the magneto-optical disk drive 80 or the

hard disk drive 82.

The clock 78 can detect and display a point of time and/or a period of time and is used by the CPU 70 to conduct control operations, which will be described later. Fig. 1 shows the clock 78 as a clock integrated in the controller (for example, an internal electronic clock in a general personal computer). However, the clock 78 may be an external clock for the controller 60.

The second and third interfaces 66 and 68, the CPU 70, the first and second memories 72 and 74, the switching circuit 75, the magneto-optical disk drive 80, and the hard disk drive 82 constitute a continuous recording system as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. The continuous recording system is less expensive than the system of the prior art because only one magneto-optical disk drive is required, the prior-art system requiring two magneto-optical disk drives. Additionally, since the continuous recording system can be configured using one personal computer as described above, the system space can be minimized. Operation of the continuous recording system will be described as part of the operation of the surveillance system 100.

The hard disk 83 of the hard disk drive 82 stores thereon, for example, system parameters of the surveillance system 100. The system parameters are operation environments such as an image compression

ratio used by the JPEG codec 50, a recording time set when an alarm signal is received from the alarm 12, a switching sequence and a switching interval of the monitor cameras 10 by the selector 14, a recording interval of frame, and an image capturing interval. When it is necessary to change the operation environments, the user may individually change the system parameters.

The communication unit 76 is constituted, for example, with a modem and is connected to a communication line such as a commercial online system (e.g., American Online) and/or a leased line. Since the communication line is also connected to a maker of the recording method of the present invention, which will be similarly later described, the user can receive an update service of the recording method as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, for example, via an internet provider.

Next, operation of the surveillance system will be described. When a power supply, not shown, of the controller 60 of the surveillance system 100 is turned on, an operating system (OS) automatically executes an application program stored in the second memory 74 to load necessary programs in the first memory 72.

First, when a suspicious person enters a monitor objective zone, the sensor senses the suspicious person and an alarm signal is sent to the

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interface 64 connected to the PCI bus 62 of the controller 60. In response thereto, the controller 60 controls the selector 14 to select the video camera 10 near the suspicious person such that the camera tries to identify the suspicious person. Selectively, the selector 14 may supply information of a place of the suspicious person to the video camera 10 to change and/or to adjust a direction and a focusing condition of a lens of the video camera 10. The image shot by the video camera is represented, for example, by a plurality of consecutive frames successive in a time series fashion, each frame having a rectangular contour of 240 vertical pixels by 720 horizontal pixels.

In this embodiment, while the video cameras 10 are continuously powered, an operation to record images thereof is started by an alarm signal. Naturally, regardless of the alarm signal, the event image recording may be continuously conducted or may be started when a timer (not shown) indicates arrival of a predetermined time (for example, 6 p.m. at which the working hours end). Moreover, alternatively, the recording may be started in response to a manual operation to depress a record button. In either case, it is necessary to replace the magneto-optical disk 81 of the magneto-optical disk drive 80. It is to be understood that the period of time in which the continuous recording is possible is further reduced when a super disk drive is employed in place of the

magneto-optical disk drive 80, that is, when a recording medium such as a super disk having a storage capacity smaller than that of a magneto-optical disk 81 is used in place thereof.

5 Information from the video camera 10 is inputted to the video decoder 16 with a correspondence established between the information and the pertinent camera by the selector 14. For convenience of explanation, attention will be directed only to
10 information from one video camera 10 in the following description. An analog composite signal sent from the video camera 10 is converted by the video decoder 16 into a digital image and is sent to the adaptive input digital filter 30 of the DSP 20. In this situation,
15 the user beforehand operates the DSP 20 or the controller 60 to store a desired threshold value D_s in the adaptive input digital filter 30.

 The adaptive input filter 30 checks by the differential coefficient detector 32 a differential
20 coefficient of the input digital image to determine whether or not the input digital image is allowed to pass the lowpass filter 36. The input filter 30 then transmits information of filter data including B_i , D_s , and D_i - D_s via the PCI bus 62 to the CPU 70 of the
25 controller 60. The switching circuit 38 sends image data to the JPEG codec 50. Specifically, the switching circuit 38 sends B_i via the lowpass filter 36 to the JPEG codec 50 and sends B_j directly thereto. However,

the JPEG codec 50 can receive the image data only after the JPEG codec 50 has received a capturing command issued by the CPU 70 using the control program.

The surveillance system as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention can use several recording methods respectively in an independent way or can use combinations thereof. The recording methods include an extended recording method in which the recording time is extended by deleting data items duplicated in the data to be recorded and a continuous recording method to prevent data loss during the replacement. Moreover, according to the present invention, there is also proposed a detailed recording method in which even when the extended recording method is adopted, the data recording density is increased beginning at a point of time which is a predetermined period of time before occurrence of an alarm signal.

IV Extended recording method

Next, description will be given of an extended recording method as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. The recording method aims at elongating the recording period of time of the magnetooptical disk 81 (without changing the storage capacity thereof). Therefore, the controller 60 as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention can set at least two kinds of recording mode, namely, an ordinary recording mode and an extended recording mode.

recorded per unitary time on the magneto-optical disk 81 is reduced to minimize the quantity of data recorded on the disk 81 to thereby extend the recording period of time of the disk 81. This method is implemented using the following fact. That is, in the recording method of the present invention, since continuous image data contains substantially the same information in its sections within quite a short period of time, omission or (thinning out) of data does not considerably influence quality of resultant information. Therefore, although image data in a short period time is lost, the overall recording time is extended.

It is possible to set the control program such that whether or not the recording method of the embodiment is adopted is specified as a user option. In this situation, by determining a desired recording method according to importance of the image data, the user can use the recording method of the embodiment beginning at the recording start point or at a point of time, for example, 30 minutes before the replacement of the magneto-optical disk 81.

There exists a case in which, for example, image data contains quite short information regarding a face of a suspect possibly shot by the camera 10. In such a case, it is not desirably to thin out the image data beginning at the record starting point. On the other hand, it is also not favorable that all image data cannot be obtained when the user forgets

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appropriate replacement of the magneto-optical disk 81. Therefore, in this situation, the ordinary recording mode is used in the record starting phase to continuously record image data to guarantee recording of all image data, and the extended recording mode can be used beginning at a point of time 30 minutes before the replacement of the magneto-optical disk 81.

In this regard, the recording method of the embodiment can be executed in a plurality of methods including four methods as below. However, the present invention is not restricted by these methods, namely, it is to be appreciated that any method which guarantees the advantage to reduce the number of record frames per unitary time and the advantage of reducing the record data quantity per unitary time can be used. Additionally, which one of the methods is to be used can be beforehand set by the user or by the CPU using default values. It is also possible to use a combination of these methods.

IV-1 Recording under control of capturing command

In a first method, occurrence of a capturing command is controlled to reduce the number of frames per unitary time. This method will be next described by referring to Fig. 6. In this connection, Fig. 6 is a timing chart for exemplarily explaining a relationship between an acquiring command and image data in a recording method of the present invention.

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In Fig. 6, a capturing command TC is indicated by an on state and an off state. In the on state, the capturing command is being issued, and in the off state, the capturing command is not being issued. As above, the
 5 JPEG codec 50 can capture image data (ID; digital data) from the input filter 30 only when the capturing command is being issued.

As shown in an upper section of Fig. 6, when the CPU 70 sends a capturing command TC to the JPEG
 10 codec 50 at time 0, the JPEG codec 50 continuously (i.e., not intermittently in a time series fashion) captures image data ID beginning at time 0. The captured image data is entirely and continuously recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81, which will be
 15 described later. For example, when an image including frames of which each includes P_n bytes is recorded, by a capturing command shown in the upper section of Fig. 6, at a rate of n frames per second on the magneto-optical disk 81 having a storage capacity of C_r
 20 bytes, a period of time T_1 (seconds) available for the continuous recording is represented by expression (1).

$$T_1 = C_r / P_n \cdot n$$

This means that when the recording is started at time 0, the magneto-optical disk 81 can record the
 25 image data until time T_1 . In other words, if the disk 81 is not replaced, no image data is recorded after the

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point of time T1.

On the other hand, as shown in a lower section of Fig. 6, when the capturing command TC is repeatedly turned on and off, the JPEG codec 50 captures only image data items I1, I3, and so on, and image data items I2, I4, and the like are thinned out. In the first method, the data is thinned out in the frame unit. The CPU 70 can freely set the capturing command on/off period such as $t1$, $t2 - t1$, $t3 - t2$, or $t4 - t3$.

When the capturing command TC is on, the associated image data items I1, I3, etc. are recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81 in a continuous way (that is, after image data I1, the image data I3 is immediately recorded thereon), which will be described later.

Assume that according to the capturing command shown in the lower section of Fig. 6, the image data ID is recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81 having a storage capacity of C_r bytes. Until a remaining storage capacity of the disk 81 becomes C_a bytes, the image data is recorded at a rate of n frames per second, each frame including P_n bytes. After the remaining storage capacity of the disk 81 becomes C_a bytes, the image data ID is recorded at a reduced rate of m frames per second. In this situation, when the magneto-optical disk 81 is not replaced, the magneto-optical disk 81 can continuously record image data ID for a period of time of T_2 by expression (2).

$$T2 = (Cr - Ca) / Pn \cdot n + Ca / Pn \cdot m$$

This means that when the recording is started at time 0, the magneto-optical disk 81 can record the image data until the point of time T2. Additionally,
 5 T2 - T1 is represented by expression (3).

$$T2 - T1 = Ca(n - m) / Pn \cdot n \cdot m > 0$$

Therefore, according to the recording method of the embodiment, the magneto-optical disk 81 can record image data in a time zone of T2 - T1 in which no
 10 image data can be recorded in the prior art. In this connection, since the storage capacity Cr of the disk 81 is kept unchanged, the period of time T2 - T1 also equivalent to the total thin-out time of image data.

Moreover, since the controller 60 of the
 15 present invention can change the capture command on/of period as above, the recording time may be extended by recording an image including frames of which each includes Pn bytes, for example, at a stepwise reducing recording density: n frames per second, m frames per
 20 second, l frame per second, and k frame per second (n > m > l > k).

IV-2 Recording under data capturing control of video decoder 16 and/or input filter 30

Next, description will be given of a second

method used in the first embodiment of the present invention. In the second method, image data is thinned out when the input filter 30 captures image data from the video decoder 16 and/or the JPEG codec 50 captures image data from the input filter 30. Assume that the JPEG codec 50 captures image data from the input filter 30 by the capturing command shown in the upper section of Fig. 6, the image data including, for example, frames each of which is represented as 240 vertical pixels by 720 horizontal pixels (the image data corresponds to 345,600 bytes when two bytes are required as data per pixel). In this situation, when every second pixel is thinned out in the vertical and horizontal directions, there will be recorded image data (corresponding to 86,400 bytes) representing a rectangular image of 120 vertical pixels by 360 horizontal pixels (the size thereof is half that of the original image). It can be understood that the number of necessary bytes to be recorded is thus reduced and hence the recording time on the magnetooptical disk 81 is elongated. In the second method, the data is thinned out in the pixel unit as above.

The JPEG codec 50 used in the present invention has a function to thin out a desired amount of data from the image data from the input filter 30 according to a command from the CPU 70. The CPU 70 of the controller 60 can set the amount of thin-out data using a control program. The present invention has an

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advantage that the configuration is simplified since it is not necessary to install an independent thin-out device. However, according to the present invention, there may be installed an independent thin-out device.

- 5 When an independent thin-out device is installed, the configuration is particularly efficient in a case in which an image compression/depression device other than the JPEG codec is used and the image compression/depression device has not an image data
- 10 thin-out function.

IV-3 Recording under control of frame buffer 58

- Description will be next given of a third method used in the first embodiment of the present invention. In this method, the JPEG codec 50 selects
- 15 image data read from the frame buffer 58. First, according to a capturing command shown in an upper section of Fig. 2, the JPEG codec 50 captures image data sent from the input file 30 and then immediately and temporarily stores the image data in the frame
- 20 buffer 58 without conducting an operation of the JPEG compression/decompression algorithm. Thereafter, the JPEG codec 50 reads the image data from the frame buffer 58 according to a readout command from the CPU
70. When the readout command from the CPU 70 is set to
- 25 a form similar to that of the capturing command shown in a lower section of Fig. 2, there can be obtained an advantage similar to that of the capturing command

shown in the lower section of Fig. 2. Therefore, the data is thinned out in the frame unit in the third method. That the CPU 70 can control the readout command according to a control command is substantially the same as for the first method.

IV-4 Recording under data capturing control of frame buffer 58

Next, description will be given of a fourth method used in the first embodiment of present

10 invention. In this method, the JPEG codec 50 thins out image data read from the frame buffer 58 in the same manner as for the second method. It is therefore to be understood that the fourth method has an advantage similar to that of the second method. Consequently,

15 the data is thinned out in the pixel unit in the fourth method. That the CPU 70 can control the thin-out data amount according to a control command is substantially the same as for the second method.

IV-5 Recording by controlling compression ratio

20 The JPEG codec 50 receives the image data, conducts a DCT operation and a Hoffman coding for the image data to obtain a compressed data string, and transmits the compressed data string via the PCI bus 62 to the CPU 70 of the controller 60. The general

25 operation of the JPEG codec 50 is well known in consideration of, for example, the MD2310 described

a frequency equal to or more than a particular frequency can be regarded as zero. By regarding the spectrum as zero, particular data is removed, which corresponds to "compression". Therefore, when a data
5 string compressed by the sequential DCT operation is expanded, the original image is not completely replayed, that is, the decompressed data includes a loss. When the compression ratio is increased, the loss is also increased in general.

10 IV-6 Control by CPU 70

The CPU 70 writes information of file data in a comment marker to create a JPEG file together with a compressed data string and then temporarily stores the JPEG file in the first memory 72. Thereafter, the CPU
15 70 transfers the JPEG file from the first memory 72 to the magneto-optical disk drive 80 to record the JPEG file on the magneto-optical disk 81. Selectively, the controller 60 can transmit the JPEG file via a modem and a communication line, not shown, connected to the
20 PCI bus 62 to another system. These operations are controlled by the control program. Simultaneously, the CPU 70 can obtain, using an application program loaded in the first memory 72, information of a recording start time and a current time from the clock 78 to know
25 a remaining period of time to store data on the magneto-optical disk 81 (and/or a remaining available capacity thereof).

Next, an example of the control method used by the CPU 70 will be described by referring to Fig. 7. Before the operation is started, the CPU 70 can send a request to the user to determine whether or not the user requires a change of the recording mode. If the user requires the change of the recording mode, the CPU 70 issues a request to the user to determine when the extended recording is to be started. Having received information in response to the requests, the CPU 70 stores the information in the second memory 74 or on the hard disk 83. Under this condition, before the recording is started, the CPU 70 loads the information regarding the recording mode change sent from the user in the first memory 72 to determine the setting items for the recording mode change (step 1002).

Selectively, the CPU 70 can issue the question to the user at a point of time which is 35 minutes before the storage capacity of the magneto-optical disk 81 is used up such that the operation is automatically changed to the extended recording mode beginning at a point of time which is 30 minutes before the storage capacity of the magneto-optical disk 81 is used up if the user does not positively reject the mode change. In this connection, the controller 22 is a general personal computer or the like including input devices such as a keyboard, a mouse, and a joystick, the user operates such an input device to input an answer to the question regarding selection the

higher than that of the extended recording mode), and the ordinary recording mode is adopted until the alarm signal is transmitted (step 1008). In the recording method, assuming occurrence of an alarm signal as

- 5 occurrence of an event, the intermittent recording is started using the alarm signal as a trigger. This method hence has an advantage that the recording density is increased after occurrence of the alarm signal to thereby improve the drawback accompanying the
- 10 intermittent recording method described above. However, the inventors recognized that before occurrence of an alarm signal, an event already occurred in an actual situation, and hence if the alarm signal is used as the trigger, video at the point of
- 15 occurrence of a crime and video before and after the point of occurrence of the crime cannot be recorded. For example, in a case in which an alarm signal is generated when it is detected that a suspicious person enters a monitored region, the suspicious person
- 20 already conducted an act of crime to enter the monitored region at occurrence of an alarm signal and hence images in which the suspicious person conducts the act of crime cannot be obtained.

- In this situation, since importance of data
- 25 is beforehand increased at occurrence of the alarm signal, it is desirable to increase the data recording density (to a maximum data recording density if possible) slightly before the occurrence of the alarm

signal. Referring next to Figs. 8 to 10, description will be given of a recording method in which the data recording density is increased slightly before the occurrence of the alarm signal. Fig. 8 is a flowchart of a recording method which is executed by the CPU 70 of the surveillance system 100 shown in Fig. 1.

According to the recording method as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, data of a monitored object is sent from the surveillance camera 10 via the video decoder 16 to the JPEG codec 50. Thereafter, the JPEG codec 50 sends output data therefrom to the first memory 72. The output data is once stored in the memory 72 and is delayed thereby. The delayed data is converted by the CPU 70 into a JPEG 15 file to be supplied from the first memory 72 to either one or both of the magnetooptical disk drive 80 and the hard disk drive 82. In this connection, for simplicity of explanation, the data is supplied from the first memory 72 to the magnetooptical disk drive 80 in the 20 description below. When the output from the first memory 72 is supplied to the hard disk drive 82, it is only necessary to replace the magnetooptical disk drive 80 with the hard disk drive 82 in the description. As above, the first memory 72 temporarily stores the 25 compressed data string sent from the JPEG codec 50 to delay the compressed data string. Furthermore, the compressed data string stored in the first memory 72 contains information larger in quantity than associated

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information recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81, which will be described later. As a result, a delay time (margin in time) in which the data is sent from the memory 72 to the magneto-optical disk drive 80 makes it possible that the data temporarily stored in the first memory 72 is selected/edited and part or all of the data is transferred to the magneto-optical disk drive 80.

Next, description will be given of a recording method as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. The recording method has, as shown in Fig. 8, an ordinary extended recording mode used after the controller 60 of the surveillance system 100 is powered until an alarm signal from the alarm 12 is inputted to the controller 60 and a detailed recording mode started after the alarm signal is inputted to the controller 22 (step 1102). In this connection, the user of the controller 60 can change the recording mode by operating an input device such as an operation panel, a keyboard, or a mouse, not shown (that is, the CPU 70 can also change the mode regardless of the alarm signal). As a result, after a shooting operation of an event (such as an act of crime) is completed, the surveillance system 100 can be reset from the detailed recording mode to the ordinary extended recording mode.

Referring next to Fig. 9, description will be given of the ordinary extended recording mode. In this connection, Fig. 9 is a flowchart for explaining the

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ordinary extended recording mode as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. Incidentally, regardless of the flowchart shown in Fig. 9, when the alarm 12 supplies an alarm signal as an interruption
5 signal to the controller 60, the CPU 70 controls the respective components such that the ordinary recording mode is terminated to be changed to the detailed recording mode. Since any interruption control well known in the pertinent technical field can be used,
10 detailed description thereof will be omitted in this paragraph.

The ordinary extended recording mode is a recording mode adopted by the surveillance system 100 until an alarm signal is supplied from the alarm 12 to
15 the controller 60, and either one of the continuous recording modes described above can be adopted. However, in the flowchart shown in Fig. 9, it is necessary to particularly pay attention to a point that data is delayed by the first memory 72. More
20 specifically, the ordinary extended recording mode is adopted, for example, in a situation in which the surveillance camera 10 monitors an object in a state without any particular event, in a case of a reserved recording operation in which the recording is started
25 when a timer (not shown) indicates arrival of a reserved time (for example, 6 p.m. at which the working hours end); in a case in which a recording operation is in a wait state (standby) waiting for an alarm signal,

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or in a case (in which data is recorded from the first memory 72 onto the magneto-optical disk 81), which will be described later.

In the ordinary extended recording mode, when
5 the surveillance camera 10 monitors a monitored object
(an object to be shot by the camera 10) to send
monitored information via the JPEG coded 50 to the
first memory 72, the video interval time or a number of
frames Fr per unitary time is set to be equal to or
10 more than a recording period of time or a number of
frames Fu per unitary time, which will be described
later, specified by the user in an operation to record
data outputted from the first memory 72 onto the
magneto-optical disk 81 (step 2002).

15 The relationship $Fr \geq Fu$ is reversed in the
relationship with respect to the interval of time. In
this embodiment, the maker writes the relationship in
the control program or the system parameter to be
stored in the second memory 74 or on the hard disk 83.
20 In the present invention, the user may also change or
set the relationship. Furthermore, the video period of
time or the number of frames per unitary time for the
JPEG codec 50 to capture digital image data from the
video decoder 16 is set to be equal to the video period
25 of time or the number of frames per unitary time as Fr
for the first memory 72 to capture digital image data
(compressed data string) from the JPEG codec 50.
However, in the present invention, the value may vary

from each other depending on cases. In such a case, Fr represents the video period of time or the number of frames per unitary time for the first memory 72 to capture digital image data from the JPEG codec 50.

5 The value of Fr is favorably set to be equal to a minimum interval of time or a maximum number of frames Fm per unitary time for the recording operation of the surveillance system. By this setting, it is possible to prevent any loss of images of the object
10 shot by the camera. The value of Fm is determined according to, for example, performance of the JPEG codec 50 and the first memory 72. For example, in a state of $F_m < F_r$, information with a quantity less than a maximum recordable information quantity of the first
15 memory 72 per unitary time is supplied to the first memory 72 per unitary time, and hence the first memory 72 is not operating with maximum performance. Moreover, in a state of $F_m > F_r$, information with a quantity more than a maximum recordable information
20 quantity of the first memory 72 per unitary time is supplied to the first memory 72 per unitary time, and hence the first memory 72 cannot store all information received. Therefore, for example, it is favorable to write digital image data in the first memory 72 with F_m
25 = F_r = 30 frames per second.

When the recording capacity of the first memory 72 is used up, in other words, until the first memory 72 becomes full of data, the CPU 70 stores

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digital image data from the JPRG codec 21 in the first memory 72 (step 2004). When it is determined that the first memory 72 becomes full of data (step 2004), the CPU 70 records digital image data from the first memory 72 onto a magneto-optical disk 81u as a storage medium at a rate of F_u (e.g., ten frames per second) in a sequence of time beginning at the oldest data (step 2006). It is to be understood that in the ordinary extended recording mode, the digital image data is thinned out at a rate of 20 frames per second in the recording thereof from the first memory 72 onto the magneto-optical disk 81 of the magneto-optical disk drive 80. As above, such a thin-out operation is allowed for the following reasons. The ordinary extended recording mode is disposed to be used for the shooting operation in a state in which a particular event does not occur and hence data is less important; consecutive image data items contain substantially the same information between a lapse of quite a short period of time and hence even if such information is omitted, the resultant information is not adversely influenced; and although image data in a short period of time is lost in the surveillance system 100, the overall recording time is elongated. Moreover, it can be understood that the digital image data is delayed for the storage capacity of the first memory 72.

Incidentally, since the values of F_m , F_r , and F_u are only exemplarily indicated, attention is to be

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made to possibility of setting as $F_u = F_r$.

Furthermore, step 2006 includes a case in which the number of record frames per unitary time is set to zero. In this case, data is not recorded on the
5 magneto-optical disk 81 in the ordinary extended recording mode, and the digital image data of which the quantity is equal to the storage capacity of the memory 72 is only temporarily kept therein.

Next, the detailed recording mode will be
10 described by referring to Fig. 10. In this connection, Fig. 10 is a flowchart for explaining a detailed recording mode of the recording method as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. The detailed recording mode is a mode adopted by the surveillance
15 system after an alarm signal is supplied from the alarm 12 to the controller 60. The alarm 12 generates an alarm signal, for example, in response to a sense signal of a sensor, not shown, having detected an event that a suspicious person enters its monitor region.
20 The alarm 12 then transmits the alarm signal to the interface 64 connected to the PCI bus 62 of the controller 60. As a result, the CPU 70 of the controller 60 recognizes the alarm signal. As above, the detailed recording mode is a recording mode adopted
25 at occurrence of an event such as an event of crime.

In response to the alarm signal, the CPU 70 controls the selector 14 to select the surveillance camera 10 near the suspicious person such that the

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camera tries to identify the suspicious person.

Selectively, the selector 14 may supply information of a place of the suspicious person to the surveillance camera 10 to change and/or to adjust a direction and a focusing condition of a lens of the surveillance camera 10. The image shot by the surveillance camera 10 is represented, for example, by a plurality of consecutive frames successive in a time series fashion, each frame having a rectangular contour of 240 vertical pixels by 720 horizontal pixels.

Information from the surveillance camera 10 is inputted to the video decoder 16 with a correspondence established between the information and the pertinent camera by the selector 14. Subsequently, for convenience of explanation, attention will be given only to information from one video camera 10 in the description below. An analog composite signal sent from the surveillance camera 10 is converted by the video decoder 16 into a digital image and is sent to the JPEG codec 50. The CPU 70 can control the capturing of the image data by the JPEG codec 50 using the control program of the system parameter.

Although the detailed recording mode also uses steps 2002 and 2006 described above, step 2006 is replaced with step 2008. Step 2008 executes at least two operations. These operations are favorably executed at the same time. However, the present invention also covers a case in which either one

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thereof is executed. Furthermore, these operations can also be used even when the number of record frames per unitary time is set to zero in the ordinary extended recording mode.

- 5 First, in step 2008, digital image data which has been recorded in the first memory 72 and of which the amount is equivalent to a predetermined period of time before occurrence of an alarm signal is written on the magneto-optical disk 81 at a time. In this
- 10 embodiment, there is conducted, in place of an operation to output the digital image data from the JPEG codec 50 to the magneto-optical disk drive 80, operation in which the data from the JPEG codec 50 is once stored in the first memory 72 and then the data is
- 15 outputted from the first memory 72 to the magneto-optical disk drive 80. Therefore, the first memory 72 conducts a function of a buffer to delay the recording operation of the digital image data on magneto-optical disk 81. This makes it possible to
- 20 record data before the alarm signal, which cannot be recorded in the prior art.

- For example, in a situation, when an alarm signal is generated at detection of an event in which a suspicious person enters a monitored region, before the
- 25 alarm signal is generated, an event of crime that a suspicious person enters a monitored region has already occurred. Consequently, in the first method of the intermittent video recording method in which the

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recording is started using an alarm signal as a trigger, images in which the suspicious person conducts the act of crime cannot be obtained. However, in the recording method of the present embodiment, data of a predetermined period of time before occurrence of the alarm signal can be also recorded. Therefore, it is possible to obtain, for example, an image at a point of time of a criminal act when a suspicious person breaks a window to enter a place.

The predetermined period of time before occurrence of the alarm signal depends on the storage capacity of the first memory 72. For example, when the first memory 72 can store digital video data of 600 frames, the period of time is a delay time, e.g., 20 seconds for data corresponding to 600 frames. Therefore, in this situation, digital video data before occurrence of the alarm signal can be recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81 for at most 20 seconds. Since the digital video data for at most 20 seconds in the past can be stored, the user can set a particular period of time within the range of 20 seconds to set the period to the system. It is to be understood that by increasing the capacity of the first memory 72, the predetermined period can be adjusted.

Second, after the occurrence of the alarm signal, the CPU 80 sets F_u to a value (F_u') larger than the value of F_u in step 2006 shown in Fig. 3, favorably to the value of F_r , and more favorably as $F_u = F_r = F_m$.

As described above, by reducing difference between Fr and Fm, the contents of the digital image data are rarely lost before the digital image data is stored in the first memory 72. In step 2006 as described above, since the digital image data is recorded from the first memory 72 onto the magneto-optical disk 81 at the rate Fu, the data is thinned out. In contrast thereto, in step 2008 shown in Fig. 10, since the image data after occurrence of an alarm signal is more important than the image data therebefore, the data recording density is increased to prevent loss of information.

Referring next to Fig. 11, description will be given of an advantage of the recording method of the present invention. In this connection, Fig. 11 is a schematic diagram with respect to lapsed time in the recording method according to the present invention. Fig. 11 shows an advantage of the recording method of the present invention in terms of a recording time, not the number of frame. However, according to the disclosure of the present invention, it is possible for those skilled in the art to easily replace the recording time with the number of frames. In Fig. 11, ΔT_1 is a minimum interval of time corresponding to Fm for the recording operation in the surveillance system 100. To is a point of time when the controller 22 receives an alarm signal from the alarm 12. The controller 60 can obtain an event occurrence time To, for example, from the clock 78. Ta is a video

recording period of time after detection of a alarm signal. T_a is set by the user and corresponds to F_u described above. T_b is a video recording period of time immediately before detection of an alarm signal.

5 T_b is set by the user and is at most T_m . T_m is the maximum video recording period of time for the recording of data in the first memory 72 in the past (this corresponds, for example, 20 seconds above). Moreover, T_c is a video recording interval of time set
10 by the user. In relation to the method of the present invention, T_c is a video recording interval of time before detection of an alarm signal and corresponds to F_u .

Case (B) shows an extended recording method
15 started always at a predetermined setting time or at a predetermined setting time. Regardless of presence/absence of an alarm signal, an image of an object is intermittently or continually recorded for a period of time of T_c . In the recording method of case
20 (B), images before and after time T_0 cannot be recorded. Furthermore, it is to be understood that the video recording density is low after time T_0 , and hence there occurs considerable loss of necessary information.

In case (C), data is recorded in the extended
25 recording mode before occurrence of an alarm signal, and after occurrence thereof, the user changes the recording period of time T_c to an available value, i.e., a fixed period of time of T_a seconds to change

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result, an image of quite an important image at a point of time and images before and after the point of time can be completely recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81, and the capacity of the magneto-optical disk 81 can be efficiently consumed. This leads to realization of the surveillance operation for a long period of time. In Fig. 11, $T_a + T_b$ corresponds to T_m . Incidentally, although Fig. 5 does not show a recording density after a point of time of $T_0 + T_a$, the recording density is favorably higher than T_c . More favorably, in place of the operation to intermittently record images of an object, the images are completely recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81 at a recording interval ΔT_1 (seconds).

In this embodiment, depending on presence/absence of an alarm signal, the recording mode is divided into two modes, namely, the ordinary extended mode and the detailed recording mode. However, it is to be understood that the detailed recording mode can be further divided into many stages of modes according to a plurality of alarm signals and other alarm information in a plurality of stages. Additionally, the control program can be set such that regardless of presence/absence of an alarm signal, the detailed recording mode is used by a user option or by the default of the CPU 70. For example, the ordinary extended recording mode is used within the working hours or in a case in which the guard watches the

monitor 84 in an online fashion, which will be described later, and the detailed recording mode is used in any other cases. This applies not only to this embodiment but also to all other variations, which will be described later.

Next, description will be given of another embodiment of the present invention. According to a recording method of the embodiment, in the detailed recording mode, the compression ratio used in the JPEG compression/decompression algorithm is set to a value lower than that of the compression ratio ordinarily used in the prior art (that is, the ordinary extended recording mode) to thereby increase the amount of information recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81.

For example, a compression ratio of 1/20 in the prior art is changed to a compression ratio of 1/15. This prevents loss of information after occurrence of an event. The CPU 72 can freely set the compression ratio by the control program as described above.

Whether or not the recording method of the embodiment is adopted or whether or not the recording method of this embodiment is combined with the recording method of the embodiment described above can be specified as a user option. In other words, it may be possible in the recording method of the present embodiment that a step to set the compression ratio to a value smaller than that of the compression ratio in the extended recording mode is disposed as, for

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surveillance system, and hence it is natural that the signal used as the trigger is not limited to the alarm signal. Moreover, although the digital image data is delayed by the first memory 72 in the embodiment, such

5 a delay function can be naturally achieved by other members such as a frame buffer and any other buffer member.

V Continuous recording method

Next, description will be given of a

10 continuous recording method to prevent data loss in association with the replacement. The CPU 70 receives compressed data string from the JPEG codec 50 to create a JPEG file, once stores the JPEG file in the first memory 72, and then transfers the JPEG file therefrom

15 to the magneto-optical drive 80 for the recording thereof. However, since the JPEG file data transferred has data exceeding the storage capacity of a magneto-optical disk 81, the user must replace the magneto-optical disk 81. To prevent an event in which

20 the JPEG file is not recorded during the replacement of the magneto-optical disk 81, the control program stored in the second memory 74 controls the recording operation according to a control procedure of Fig. 12 or 13. In this connection, Fig. 12 shows an example of

25 a control flowchart regarding the continuous recording executed by the CPU 70. Additionally, Fig. 13 shows another example of a control flowchart regarding the

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continuous recording executed by the CPU 70.

In the embodiment, it is assumed that a transfer rate of the JPEG file is T_i (bytes/second), a storage capacity of each magneto-optical disk 81 is C_r (bytes), and a transfer rate of the magneto-optical disk drive 24 is T_r (bytes/second). Moreover, it is assumed that a storage capacity of the hard disk 83 is C_a (bytes) and a transfer rate of the hard disk drive 82 is T_a (bytes/second). In this embodiment, "transfer rate" is a mean transfer rate including overhead such as time required for command issuance, positioning, and latency. Furthermore, it is assumed in the embodiment that the following expressions hold.

$$T_r > T_i$$

$$T_a > T_i$$

V-1 Recording in which time-series property of data does not completely correspond to increase of addresses

Referring to Fig. 12, the control program stored in the second memory 74 controls the switching circuit 75, the second interface 66, and the magneto-optical disk drive 80 to record the JPEG file on a magneto-optical disk 81 (step 1202). Incidentally, as described above, when the recording is started by an alarm signal, a step to determine whether or not an alarm signal is already received is disposed in a stage before the start of Fig. 8. In this situation, assume

In phase 2, the magneto-optical disk 81 stores thereon the JPEG file transferred from the first memory 72 and data accumulated on the hard disk 83 during the disk replacement. A data stream including data from the JPEG codec 2 and data from the hard disk drive 26 is inputted to the magneto-optical disk 81, the respective data items being alternately inputted in the unit of one byte or a desired number of bytes. The control program can beforehand determine the number of bytes to be alternately inputted. A capacity of data Ct (bytes) accumulated in the hard disk drive during the disk replacement is represented by the following expression.

For this expression, the hard disk storage
20 capacity C_a must satisfy expression (8) below.

A transfer rate T_c from the hard disk drive 82 to the magneto-optical disk drive 80 is expressed as follows.

$$T_{cmin} = T_i^2 \cdot t_c / (C_{rr} - T_i \cdot t_c)$$

10 Incidentally, a condition that the copy
starts with the transfer rate T_{cmin} and the copy from
the hard disk 83 onto the magneto-optical disk 81 is
completed when the magneto-optical disk 81 becomes full
of data is represented by the following expression.

By obtaining T_c from expression (11), expression (10) can be attained. To operate the magneto-optical disk drive 80 with maximum performance, the transfer rate T_a of the hard disk drive 82 must satisfy the following expression (12).

Although expression (12) does not indicate a

limit value possible for the control method, the hard disk drive 82 must satisfy the following expression (13).

$$T_a \geq T_{cmin}(T_i^2 \cdot t_c) / (C_{rr} - T_i \cdot t_c)$$

5 When the copy from the hard disk 83 onto the
magneto-optical disk 81 is completed (step 1212), the
data path from the hard disk drive 82 to the
magneto-optical disk drive 80 is interrupted (step
1214). As a result, processing returns to phase 1
10 (step 1202), and the operation is repeatedly executed
to achieve the continuous recording. In this
connection, when processing returns from step 1212 to
step 1202, information from the hard disk 83 is already
recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81. However, it is
15 assumed that the CPU 70 can monitor the time t1 to be
lapsed before the magneto-optical disk 81 becomes full
of data by calculating, using the clock 75 and the
like, a capacity of information already accumulated.

Since the input data sequence of the JPEG
20 file is not recorded on the magneto-optical disk 81 at
addresses in a time series fashion, the data sequence
must be adjusted by the software in the data reading
operation. For example, by using software to
sequentially read data from the JPEG files beginning at
25 the oldest data with respect to time, the JPEG files
are read in a time series fashion and hence image data

is appropriately ordered. It is easy for those skilled in the art to prepare such software, and hence detailed description of specific contents thereof will not avoided in this paragraph.

5 Although not particularly indicated in the flowchart shown in Fig. 12, the processing is in principle terminated when the data input of compressed data from the JPEG codec 50 is finished or the data transfer from the first memory 72 is finished. For
10 example, when the data input from the JPEG codec 50 is finished when processing is in step 1202, the CPU 70 notifies the condition via the monitor 84 or a display or the like, not shown, to the user and then terminates the recording operation. When the data input from the
15 JPEG codec 50 is finished when processing is in step 1204 or 1210, the CPU 70 notifies, when step 1212 is terminated, the condition via the monitor 84 or a display or the like, not shown, to the user and then terminates the recording operation.

20 V-2 Recording in which time-series property of data completely corresponds to increase of addresses

 Next, referring to Fig. 13, description will be given of a control method regarding another continuous recording in accordance with the present
25 invention. The control method differs from that shown in Fig. 12 and makes it possible that the time-series sequence of data inputted to the system corresponds to

addresses at which the data is recorded. Consequently, software employed for the replay need only read information in an address sequence and hence becomes simpler than the software used in Fig. 12. However, the information recorded in this control method is ordered at addresses in a sequence of recording time. Therefore, even if the software used by the control method of Fig. 12 is employed, the data can be appropriately read from the disk.

Steps 1202 to 1208 of the control method shown in Fig. 13 are substantially equal to those shown in Fig. 12 and hence detailed description thereof will be avoided. Consequently, expressions (1) to (5) used by the control method of Fig. 12 are also similarly employed by the control method shown in Fig. 13. However, it is assumed in the control method shown in Fig. 13 that step 1202 is called "phase 1", steps 1204 to 1208 are called "phase 2", and step 1122 and subsequent steps are called "phase 3".

Incidentally, according to the control method shown in Fig. 9, after a lapse of the disk replacement time t_c (step 1208), it is typical that a data path from the hard disk drive 82 to the magneto-optical disk drive 80 is reserved while keeping a data path from the first memory 72 to the hard disk drive 82 (step 1222). The processing is different in this point from step 1210 in which the magneto-optical disk drive 80 receives data from both of the first memory 72 and the hard disk

drive 82. As a result, while continuously receiving the JPEG file from the first memory 72, the hard disk drive 82 outputs, to the magneto-optical disk drive 80, the data stored on the hard disk 83 during the
 5 magneto-optical disk replacement and data inputted thereafter. Thereafter, all data of the hard disk 83 must be copied onto the magneto-optical disk 81 before the magneto-optical disk 81 becomes full of data. In this operation, the transfer rate T_c must satisfy the
 10 following expression.

$$T_c \leq \min(T_r, T_a)$$

In the expression, $\min(T_r, T_a)$ represents a smaller one of T_r and T_a . Assume that a capacity of $C(t)$ is already recorded on the hard disk at time t
 15 (seconds) after the data transfer to magneto-optical disk is started. Then, the following expression holds.

$$\begin{aligned} C(t) &= (T_i - T_c) \cdot t + T_i \cdot t_c - (T_i - T_c) \cdot t_c = \\ &= (T_i - T_c) \cdot t + T_i \cdot t_c \end{aligned}$$

In the expression, T_c is restricted by the
 20 following expression.

$$T_i < T_c \leq T_a - T_i$$

Assume that a period of time t_{cc} (seconds) is

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required to copy all data of the hard disk 83 onto the magnetooptical disk 81. This corresponds to time t for $C(t) = 0$ in expression (15) and hence t_{cc} is expressed as follows.

$$5 \quad t_{cc} = (T_c \cdot t_c) / (T_c - T_i)$$

Since the magnetooptical disk 81 must not become full of data during the period t_{cc} , the following expression is required to be satisfied.

$$\{T_c \cdot t_c / (T_c - T_i) - t_c\} \cdot T_c \leq C_{rr}$$

10 In expression (18), t_c is subtracted because no data is transferred to the magnetooptical disk 81 since the magnetooptical disk 81 is being replaced during the period of time t_c . According to expression (18), T_c is restricted by the following expression.

$$15 \quad T_c \geq C_{rr} \cdot T_i / (C_{rr} - T_i \cdot t_c)$$

As a result, to implement the control method, it is necessary to satisfy expression (16) and (19). In this way, all data recorded on the hard disk 83 can be copied onto the magnetooptical disk 81, and
 20 immediately after the end of copy, the data path from the hard disk drive 82 to the magnetooptical disk drive 80 is interrupted and the data input destination is

changed at the same time from the hard disk drive 82 to the magnetooptical disk drive 80 (step 1226).

Resultantly, processing returns to step 1102 of phase 1 and then the processing is repeatedly executed to

5 achieve the continuous recording.

Additionally, although not particularly indicated in the flowchart shown in Fig. 13, the processing is in principle terminated when the data input a compressed data string from the JPEG codec 50

10 or the transfer from the JPEG file from the first memory 72 is finished. For example, if the data input from the JPEG codec 50 is finished when the processing is in step 1202 or 1226, the CPU 70 notifies the condition via the monitor 84 or a display or the like, 15 not shown, to the user and then terminates the recording operation. If the data input from the JPEG codec 50 is finished when processing is in step 1204 or 1222, the CPU 70 notifies, when step 1224 is terminated, the condition via the monitor 84 or a 20 display or the like, not shown, to the user and then terminates the recording operation.

In concurrence with the recording, information of the video camera 10 may be displayed on the monitor 84. The monitor 84 may, for example, 25 divide its screen into partitions as many as there are video cameras 10 so that information items of all cameras are displayed one monitor. Or, an equal number of monitors 84 and video cameras 10 may be installed.

5 screens, the relative display position between the
respective divided screens can be set using the frame
buffer 58. For example, when the entire screen is
divided into four screen partitions, the partitions may
be arranged in a shape of a rectangle with a vertical
10 length of two partitions and a horizontal length of two
partitions, a rectangle including four partitions in
the horizontal direction, or a rectangle including four
partitions in the vertical direction.

To decompress a JPEG file stored on a
15 magnetooptical disk 81, the user first installs a
magnetooptical disk having stored a desired JPEG file
thereon in the magnetooptical disk drive 80. Next, the
CPU 70 sends, according to the control program, the
JPEG file to the JPEG codec 50. The JPEG codec 50
20 decompresses the JPEG file sent thereto according to a
decompression ratio described in a quantization table
definition (DQT) marker of the JPEG file and then
transmits the decompressed file in the form of digital
image signals to the video encoder 18. Furthermore,
25 the CPU generates, according to the control program,
filter data using information of an extracted comment
marker and then sends the filter data to the adaptive
output digital filter 40 of the DSP 40.

The JPEG codec 50 decompresses the JPEG file sent thereto and transmits the decompressed file to the adaptive output digital filter 40. In the filter 40, the filter data analyzer 42 acquires information of Bi, 5 Ds, and Di - Ds and determines whether or not the data is allowed to pass the peaking file 46. The switching circuit 48 outputs Bi via the peaking file 46, and outputs Bj directly therefrom to transmit these items as image data to the video encoder 18.

10 The video encoder 18 encodes the digital image signals outputted from the output filter 40 into analog composite signals and sends the signals to the monitor 84 to display an image thereof on the monitor 84. Incidentally, in the system 100, to guarantee 15 continuous display of camera information, it is desirable to install a playback dedicated monitor 84. Moreover, since the control program has also a software function to edit screens of the monitor 84 (playback, fast forward, rewind, magnification, minimization, 20 rotation, etc.), the user of the controller 60 can confirm and edit desired image information.

Incidentally, the control program of the present invention can similarly recognize a JPEG file created using Ds different from the Ds described above 25 and a JPEG file of the prior art in which the comment marker does not include Bi and the like. Therefore, as Ds used by the output filter 4, Ds set by the input filter 1 is not always directly used. That is, Ds sent

from the JPEG file processor 120 (control program) is used. When the comment marker does not include information such as Bi and the like, the peaking filter 46 does not operate, and the switching circuit 48 operates such that the output from the JPEG codec 50 directly becomes the output from the output filter 40 of the DSP 20.

Additionally, since the JPEG codec 50 such as MD2310 described in the embodiment also has a control function of the frame buffer 58, all data flow regarding the JPEG codec 50 passes the frame buffer 58. Therefore, in addition to a raster/block conversion necessary for compression/decompression, functions such as control of image display positions, magnification of an image, and minimization thereof are also achieved using the JPEG codec 50.

In the present embodiment, a block of 8 pixels by 8 pixels is used as a reference to divide the input image. It is to be appreciated that the present invention is not restricted by this embodiment. Additionally, there may be disposed a plurality of lowpass filters having different threshold values. Furthermore, the use of the present invention is not limited to the surveillance system. It can be understood by those skilled in the art that the present invention is applicable to various uses such as high-resolution photographs and the editing of an animated cartoon by a computer.

Furthermore, in the present invention, an image is formed in the JPEG format. However, it is to be understood that the surveillance system 100 as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is applicable also to any other format (e.g., a GIF format). Therefore, the surveillance system 100 can be applied to any image compressing/decompressing device other than the JPEG codec.

Moreover, in accordance with the continuous recording method as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, data is recorded using one removable recording medium drive such that when removable recording medium thereof is replaced, data is temporarily recorded on a fixed disk of a fixed disk driver. Thereafter, the data recorded on the fixed disk is transferred to a new removable recording medium replaced as above to thereby achieve continuous recording of data. It is therefore to be understood by those skilled in the art that any recording method other than those of Figs. 12 and 13 can be employed only if the advantage is obtained. Furthermore, it is to be appreciated that the continuous recording system of the present invention is not restricted by the image data recording.

VI Automatic setting and update method for system parameter and control program

Referring next to Figs. 1, 14, and 16,

description will be given of an automatic setting and update method for system parameters and control programs of the present invention. Incidentally, Fig. 14 is a general block diagram for explaining an automatic setting and update method for system parameters and control programs as an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. Fig. 15 is a flowchart primarily according to an in-execution control program 142 executed by the CPU 70. Fig. 4 is a program primarily based on an in-execution update program 152 shown in Fig. 1 to be executed by the CPU 70.

The hard disk 83 of this embodiment stores a system parameter file 144 and a control program file 154 as shown in Fig. 1. Moreover, the hard disk 83 (or the second memory 74 as an alternative unit) stores an update program 152. In addition, selectively, the hard disk 83 contains an identifier (ID) check program 164 shown in Fig. 1. The identifier check program 164 conducts collation of identifier data 172 stored, for example, on the magnetooptical disk 81. If the identifier data 72 is other than predetermined data, the program 164 rejects data communication with the magnetooptical disk 81 or notifies the condition via a display, not shown, to the user.

In Fig. 14, although the control program 142 is substantially the same as the control program file 154, different reference numerals are assigned thereto

5 control program 154 can neither set nor update its own
contents.

10 recording time set when an alarm signal is received
from the alarm 12, a switching sequence and a switching
interval of the monitor cameras 10 by the selector 14,
a recording interval of frame, and an image capturing
interval. The system parameter 144 includes a flag
15 144a. The flag 53a identifies a condition that the
system parameter 53 is entirely updated or is updated
for each operation environment condition. When these
operation environments are required to be set or
changed, the system parameter 144 is individually set
20 or updated by the user or is entirely set or updated by
an automatic setting and update program, which will be
described later.

25 third surveillance cameras 10, not shown), the camera
changing operation is sequentially conducted as from
first camera 10 to the second camera 10, from second
camera 10 to the third camera 10, and from third camera

It is natural that the user can set the flag 25 144a so that the automatic update program always updates the system parameter. The flag 144a may also be used to prevent an update program for another surveillance system or a malicious update program such

It is natural that the user can set the flag
25 144a so that the automatic update program always
updates the system parameter. The flag 144a may also
be used to prevent an update program for another
surveillance system or a malicious update program such

as a virus from updating the system parameter 144. That is, user identifier information which the identifier data 172 may contain is checked such that the update of the system parameter 144 is rejected if
5 the identifier data 172 does not match predetermined information. In this connection, the identifier collation may be naturally combined, when necessary, collation of a fingerprint, a voiceprint, and/or an encryption protocol. Furthermore, when the user
10 accesses the controller 60, the identifier may be similarly confirmed.

The control program 154 is an application program to control the respective sections. More concretely, the control program includes a hard logic
15 control to control the JPEG codec 50 and the like, a user interface, and a disk access. The application programs to constitute the control program can be created by any well known developing tools such as Visual C++ and Borland C++, and hence detailed
20 description thereof will be avoided in this paragraph. The control program 154 is set or updated at initialization or when a software version is improved thereafter to, for example, correct bugs in the program. In general, the control program 154 is not
25 freely set by the user. Moreover, if the program 154 is freely changed, there exists a fear that the surveillance system 100 becomes inoperative. Therefore, the control program 154 in this embodiment

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does not include a flag similar to the flag 144a. However, according to the present invention, the control program 154 may contain a flag.

Incidentally, as distinct from this
5 embodiment in which the system parameter 144 and the control program 154 are stored on the hard disk 83, it is also possible to store the system parameter 144 and/or the control program 154 in the second memory 74.

Since the communication unit 76 is also
10 connected to a maker of the system parameter 144 and the control program 152, the user can receive an update service thereof via, for example, an internet provider.

Subsequently, description will be given of the setting and update procedure of the system
15 parameter 144 by referring to Figs. 1, 14, and 15. First, the user installs a magneto-optical disk 81 having stored thereon a latest system parameter file 174 in the magneto-optical disk drive 80. Incidentally, for simplification of explanation, the magneto-optical
20 disk 81 contains identifier data 172, the latest system parameter file 174, and a latest control program 176 in this embodiment. However, at least one item thereof may be installed on a different magneto-optical disk. The magneto-optical disk drive 80 reproduces information
25 on the magneto-optical disk 81 to send data of the information via the PCI bus 62 to the CPU 70. Or, the disk drive 80 sends, by an auto-run, data stored on the disk 81 via the PCI bus 62 to the CPU 70. First, the

determines whether or not the magneto-optical disk 81 contains the system parameter 174 (step 1306). As distinct from this embodiment, if the magneto-optical disk 81 does not contain the system parameter 174, the
5 CPU 70 notifies the condition via a display or the like, not shown, to the user and terminates the processing.

When it is determined in step 1306 that the system parameter 174 is present, the CPU 70 then
10 determines whether or not the current hard disk 83 contains the system parameter 144 or whether or not the system parameter 174 is younger than the system parameter 144 (step 1308). The latter determination is conducted through comparison of the creation date
15 between the system parameters 144 and 174. When the system parameter 144 is present and the creation date of the system parameter 144 is equal to or younger than that of the system parameter 174, it is not necessary to update the current system parameter 144. Therefore,
20 the CPU 70 notifies the condition via a display or the like, not shown, to the user and terminates the processing.

When it is determined in step 1308 that the hard disk 83 does not contain the system parameter 144,
25 the CPU 70 copies the system parameter 174 onto the hard disk 83 to thereby set the system parameter (step 1310). When it is determined in step 1308 that the creation date of the system parameter 174 is younger

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than that of the system parameter 144, the CPU 70 updates the system parameter 144 to the system parameter 174 (step 1310). When the setting or the update is finished, the CPU 70 notifies the condition via a display or the like, not shown, to the user and terminates the processing.

Next, description will be given of the setting and update procedure of the control program 154 by referring to Figs. 1, 14, and 16. First, the user installs a magneto-optical disk 81 having stored thereon a latest control program 174 in the magneto-optical disk drive 80. The magneto-optical disk drive 80 replays information on the magneto-optical disk 81 to send data of the information via the PCI bus 62 to the CPU 70. Or, the disk drive 80 sends, by an auto-run, data stored on the disk 81 via the PCI bus 62 to the CPU 70. First, the CPU 70 executes step 1302 described above.

When it is determined in step 1302 that the identifier collation is recognized, the CPU 70 makes a check to determine whether or not the magneto-optical disk 81 contains the control program 176 (step 1402). As distinct from this embodiment, when the magneto-optical disk 81 does not contain the control program 176, the CPU 70 notifies the condition via a display or the like, not shown, to the user and terminates the processing. Incidentally, the CPU 70 can execute step 1402 by the control program 142. However, when the magneto-optical disk 81 does not

contain the control program file 154, there does not exist the control program 142. Therefore, step 1402 may be achieved by the update program 152.

When it is determined in step 1402 that the
5 system program 176 is present, the CPU 70 terminates the control program 142 and initiates the update program 152 (step 1404). Alternatively, when processing of step 1402 and succeeding steps is executed by the update program 152, step 1404 is
10 removed. Next, a check is made to determine whether or not the hard disk 83 contains the control system 152 or whether or not the control program 176 is younger than the control program 152 (step 1406). The latter determination is conducted through comparison of the
15 creation date between the control programs 176 and 152. When the control program 152 is present and the creation date of the control program 152 is equal to or younger than that of the control program 176, it is not necessary to update the current control program 152.
20 Therefore, the CPU 70 notifies the condition via a display or the like, not shown, to the user and terminates the processing.

When it is determined in step 1406 that the hard disk 83 does not contain the control program 152,
25 the CPU 70 copies the control program 176 onto the hard disk 83 to thereby set the system parameter (step 1408). Moreover, when it is determined in step 1406 that the creation date of the control program 176 is

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younger than that of the control program 152, the CPU
70 updates the control program 152 to the control
program 176 (step 1408). When the setting or the
update is finished, the CPU 70 notifies the condition
5 via a display or the like, not shown, to the user and
terminates the processing.

As above, according to the method of the
present invention, the user can entirely and
automatically set and update the system parameter and
10 the control program. Therefore, the setting and update
processing can be executed in a shorter period of time
and with a smaller number of mistakes of humans as
compared with the prior art.

Incidentally, it is not necessary for the
15 user to obtain the magneto-optical disk 176 having
stored thereon the system parameter 174 and/or the
control program 176, but the user can download such
items via a communication line such as the internet, a
commercial online system, or a leased line.
20 Consequently, the present invention also covers a
setting and update method for the system parameter and
the control program using the communication line. In
this case, it is to be understood that there exists
before the steps shown in Figs. 15 and 16 a step to
25 access a predetermined address of a site or the like of
the maker for the download of the system parameter and
the control program.

In a case in which the system parameter is

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set and updated using the communication line, step 1302 shown in Fig. 15 is executed by, for example, an event in which the user inputs a user identifier and a secret code (a password). Moreover, step 1306 will be removed. Additionally, it is to be understood that steps 1308 and 1310 may be executed by a host computer on the maker side connected to the communication line. Furthermore, when the system program is set and updated using the communication line, it is to be appreciated that by removing step 1404 shown in Fig. 16, steps 1406 and 1408 may be executed by a host computer on the maker side connected to the communication line.

Description has been given of favorable embodiments of the present invention above. However, the present invention is not restricted by these embodiments but can be modified and changed in various ways within a scope of the present invention.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

Since a continuous recording method and system and a continuous recording system as exemplary embodiments of the present invention can be configured in one personal computer, the required space can be minimized.

According to a digital recording method and a digital recording system as exemplary embodiments of the present invention, a point of timing to write digital data on a storage medium is delayed using a

buffer and the buffer stores therein information equal to or more detailed than information stored on the storage medium. Therefore, there is provided a margin of time by the delay of recording point of time, and
5 information to be written from the buffer onto the recording medium can be selected and edited during the margin of time. It is hence possible to record, if necessary, information which cannot be written on the recording medium in the prior art. By applying the
10 present system to a surveillance system, it is possible to increase reliability of the surveillance system.

According to a digital recording method and a digital recording system as exemplary embodiments of the present invention, since the amount of data
15 recorded on a recording medium can be freely changed during the recording of the data, the period of time to record data can be advantageously elongated. Moreover, by applying the present invention to the surveillance system, information of a time zone in which data cannot
20 be recorded in the prior art can be recorded and hence it is possible to implement a highly reliable surveillance system.

According to an image compression/
decompression system and a surveillance system as
25 exemplary embodiments of the present invention, the mosquito noise is reduced as compared with the prior art and hence it is possible to replay images with a high quality. Additionally, since the JPEG codec of

the prior art available in the market can be used according to the present invention, the increase of the cost caused by the development of a new algorithm and the like can be prevented. When it is necessary to

5 guarantee operation similar to that of the system of the prior art without operating the primary section of the present invention, it is only necessary to set the threshold value to a larger value. Furthermore, the surveillance system of the present invention can replay

10 without any problem a JPEG file generated using a different threshold value and a JPEG file of the prior art with high mosquito noise.

Preferably, a JPEG file processor is disposed to write file data in a comment marker of the JPEG

15 file. However, the JPEG file processor does not change the compressed data string of the JPEG file. Moreover, the JPEG decompressor of the prior art does not recognize information of the comment marker of the JPEG file. Or, even when the JPEG decompressor recognizes

20 information of the comment marker, the decompressor does not use the information as reference for the decompression of the compressed data string. In consequence, a JPEG file created according to the present invention can be decompressed without any

25 problem by the JPEG codec of the prior art.

In this case, the JPEG codec of the prior art does not recognize information described in the comment marker. Or, even when the JPEG codec recognizes

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CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A continuous recording system, comprising:

an optical disk drive;

a fixed disk unit connected to said optical disk drive; and

a controller connected to said optical disk drive and said fixed disk unit, wherein

said controller controls operation such that data is inputted to said optical disk drive and is recorded on an optical disk of said optical disk drive; an input of said data is changed, when said optical disk is replaced with a new optical disk, from said optical disk to said fixed disk unit and the data is recorded on a fixed disk of said fixed disk unit; and the data recorded on said fixed disk is transferred, after said optical disk is replaced, to said new optical disk, thereby continuously recording the data.

2. (Amended) A continuous recording system according to claim 1, wherein said optical disk is a magneto-optical disk or a phase transition disk.

3. (Amended) A continuous recording method, comprising:

the first step of inputting data to an optical disk drive and recording the data on an optical disk of said optical disk drive;

the second step of changing an input of the

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data from said optical disk drive to said fixed disk unit before an available memory capacity of said optical disk is used up and recording the data on a fixed disk of said fixed disk unit;

the third step of changing the input of the data, after said optical disk is replaced, from said fixed disk unit to said optical disk drive, recording the data on a new optical disk thus replaced, reserving a data path from said fixed disk unit to said optical disk drive, and copying the data recorded on said fixed disk onto said optical disk; and

the fourth step of interrupting, after the data recorded on said fixed disk is entirely copied onto said optical disk, the data path from said fixed disk unit to said optical disk drive while keeping the input of data to said optical disk drive reserved, wherein

control of process is returned to said first step to repetitiously execute processing.

4. (Amended) A continuous recording method, comprising:

the first step of inputting data to an optical disk drive and recording the data on an optical disk of said optical disk drive;

the second step of changing an input of the data from said optical disk drive to said fixed disk unit before an available memory capacity of said optical disk is used up and recording the data on a

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fixed disk of said fixed disk unit;

the third step of reserving, after said optical disk is replaced, a data path from said fixed disk unit to said optical disk drive while keeping the input of data to said fixed disk unit reserved; and copying the data recorded on said fixed disk onto said optical disk in a time series fashion; and

the fourth step of changing the input of the data from said fixed disk unit to said optical disk drive after the data recorded on said fixed disk is entirely copied onto said optical disk, and interrupting the data path from said fixed disk unit to said optical disk drive, wherein

control of process is returned to said first step to repetitiously execute processing.

5. (Amended) A continuous recording method according to one of claims 2 to 4, wherein said optical disk is a magneto-optical disk or a phase-change disk.

6. (Amended) A surveillance system, comprising:

a surveillance camera;

a video decoder connected to said surveillance camera;

an image compressor/decompressor connected to said video decoder;

a video encoder connected to said image compressor/decompressor;

a display connected to said video encoder; and

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a continuous recording system connected to said image compressor/decompressor, wherein

said continuous recording system comprises:

an optical disk drive;

a fixed disk unit; and

a controller connected to said optical disk drive and said fixed disk unit, wherein

said controller controls operation such that image data from said image compressor/decompressor is inputted to said optical disk drive and is recorded on an optical disk of said optical disk drive; an input of said image data is changed, when said optical disk is replaced, to said fixed disk unit and the image data is recorded on a fixed disk of said fixed disk unit; and the image data recorded on said fixed disk is transferred, after said optical disk is replaced, to a new optical disk thus replaced, thereby continuously recording the image data.

7. (Amended) A surveillance system according to claim 6, wherein said optical disk is a magneto-optical disk or a phase-change disk.

8. (Amended) A digital recording method, comprising:

the step of storing digital data in a buffer at a video capturing interval equal to or less than a video recording interval set by a user and temporarily delaying the digital data; and

the step of recording the digital data which is stored in the buffer and which is delayed thereby on

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a storage medium at the video recording interval set by a user.

9. (Amended) A digital recording method according to claim 8, wherein said video capturing interval is a minimum interval of time at which data can be recorded in the buffer.

10. (Amended) A digital recording method, comprising:
the step of storing digital data in a buffer at a video capturing interval equal to or less than a first video recording interval set by a user in a first recording mode and temporarily delaying the digital data;

the step of recording the digital data which is stored in the buffer and which is delayed thereby in the first recording mode on a storage medium at the first video recording interval;

the step of changing operation from the first recording mode to the second recording mode; and

the step of recording the digital data stored in the buffer on the storage medium in the second recording mode, the digital data being stored before a point of time when operation is changed from the first recording mode to the second recording mode.

11. (Amended) A digital recording method according to claim 10, further comprising the step of recording the digital data stored in the buffer on the storage medium in the second recording mode after the recording mode change time at a second video recording interval

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shorter than the first video recording interval.

12. (Amended) A digital recording method according to claim 10, wherein the video capturing interval is a minimum interval of time at which data can be recorded in the buffer.

13. (Amended) A digital recording method according to claim 11 or 12, wherein the video recording interval is the video capturing interval.

14. (Amended) A digital recording method, comprising:
the step of capturing digital data at a video capturing interval equal to or less than a first video recording interval set by a user in a first recording mode, conducting predetermined processing including compression for the digital data to create first compressed data, and storing the first compressed data in a buffer and temporarily delaying the first compressed data;

the step of delaying by the buffer the first compressed data stored in the buffer in the first recording mode and then recording the first compressed data on a storage medium at the first video recording interval;

the step of changing operation from the first recording mode to the second recording mode;

the step of creating second compressed data with an amount of data larger than that of the first compressed data and storing the second compressed data in a buffer in the second recording mode; and

the step of delaying by the buffer the second compressed data stored in the buffer in the second recording mode and then recording the second compressed data on the storage medium.

15. (Amended) A digital recording method according to claim 14, wherein said second compressed data recording step comprises recording the digital data stored in the buffer on the storage medium in the second recording mode after the recording mode change time at a second video recording interval shorter than the first video recording interval.

16. (Amended) A digital recording method according to claim 14, further comprising the step of recording the digital data stored in the buffer on the storage medium in the second recording mode, the digital data being stored before the recording mode change time.

17. (Amended) A digital recording system, comprising:
a controller for changing operation from the first recording mode to the second recording mode;

a buffer connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller, for storing therein digital data at a video capturing interval equal to or less than a first video recording interval set by a user in the first recording mode, and for temporarily delaying the digital data; and

a recording device connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller, for recording the digital data which is stored in said

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buffer and which is delayed thereby in the first recording mode on a storage medium at the first video recording interval, and for recording the digital data stored in the buffer on the storage medium in the second recording mode, the digital data being stored before a point of time when operation is changed from the first recording mode to the second recording mode.

18. (Amended) A digital recording system, comprising:

a controller for changing operation from the first recording mode to the second recording mode;

a compressor connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller, for conducting predetermined processing including compression for the digital data, for creating first compressed data in the first recording mode, and

for creating second compressed data in the second recording mode, the second compressed data having an amount of data larger than that of the first compressed data;

a buffer controlled by said controller for storing therein the first compressed data and the second compressed data at a video capturing interval equal to or less than a first video recording interval set by a user, and for temporarily delaying the digital data; and

a recording device connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller and for recording the first compressed data and the second

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compressed data which are stored in said buffer and which are delayed thereby on a storage medium.

19. (Amended) A digital recording system according to claim 17 or 18, wherein said digital recording system is a surveillance system, further comprising an alarm connected to said controller for generating an alarm signal indicating a caution for a monitor region,

said controller changing the first recording mode to the second recording mode in response to the alarm signal.

20. (Amended) A digital recording method, comprising:

the step of setting a first recording mode and a second recording mode;

the step of conducting predetermined processing including compression for digital data, creating first compressed data in the first recording mode, and creating second compressed data in the second recording mode, the second compressed data having an amount of data smaller than that of the first compressed data; and

the step of recording the first compressed data on a recording medium in the first recording mode and recording the second compressed data on a recording medium in the second recording mode.

21. (Amended) A digital recording system, comprising: a controller capable of setting a first recording mode and a second recording mode;

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a compressor connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller, for conducting predetermined processing including compression for digital data, for creating first compressed data in the first recording mode, and for creating second compressed data in the second recording mode, the second compressed data having an amount of data smaller than that of the first compressed data; and

a recording device connected to said controller for being controlled by said controller, for recording the first compressed data on a recording medium in the first recording mode, and for recording the second compressed data on a recording medium in the second recording mode.

22. (Amended) A digital recording system according to claim 21, further comprising a detecting section for detecting a remaining amount of storage capacity of the recording medium, wherein

said controller is connected to said receives a detection result from said detecting section to change the first recording mode to the second recording mode according to the remaining amount of storage capacity of the recording medium.

23. (Amended) A digital recording system according to claim 22, wherein said compressor is controlled by said controller and thins out predetermined data from the digital data in the second recording mode to thereby

create the second compressed data.

24. (Amended) A digital recording system according to claim 23, wherein:

the digital data represents an image of a plurality of successive frames; and

the predetermined data is expressed in a unit of frames of the image.

25. (Amended) A digital recording system according to claim 23, wherein:

the digital data represents an image of a plurality of successive frames;

each of the frames includes an array of a plurality of pixels; and

the predetermined data is expressed in a unit of pixels.

26. (Amended) A digital recording system according to claim 21, wherein said compressor is controlled by said controller and uses a compression ratio in the second recording mode, the compression ratio being higher than that used in the first recording mode.

27. (Amended) A digital recording method, comprising:

the step of compressing digital data representing an image to create compressed data;

the step of recording the compressed data on a recording medium; and

the step of changing an amount of data of the digital data per unitary time during said recording step.

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28. (Amended) A digital recording method, comprising:

the step of compressing digital data to
create compressed data;

the step of recording the compressed data on
a recording medium; and

the step of changing a compression ratio to
be used in the compression of the digital data during
said recording step.

29. (Amended) A digital recording method according to
claim 28, wherein said changing step includes changing
the compression ratio before compression to a
compression ratio after compression, the compression
ratio after compression being less than the compression
ratio before compression.

30. (Amended) A surveillance system, comprising:

a surveillance camera;

a video decoder connected to said
surveillance camera for converting analog data
outputted from said surveillance camera into digital
data;

an image compressor connected to said video
decoder for conducting predetermined processing
including compression for the digital data;

a recording device connected to said image
compressor for recording the compressed digital data
compressed by the image compressor on a recording
medium; and

a controller connected to said image

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compressor and said recording device, wherein:

said controller controls said image compressor to generate first compressed data in a first recording mode and second compressed data in a second recording mode, the second compressed data having an amount of data less than that of the first compressed data; and

said recording device records the first compressed data on a recording medium in the first recording mode and the second compressed data on the recording medium in the second recording mode.

31. (Amended) A surveillance system according to claim 30, wherein:

said image compressor captures, in response to a capturing command sent from said controller, the digital data from said video decoder and compresses the digital data; and

said controller controls the capturing command to thereby control an amount of data per unitary time of the digital data captured by said image compressor.

32. (Amended) A surveillance system according to claim 30, further comprising a frame buffer connected to said image compressor for temporarily storing therein the digital data before the digital data is compressed by said image compressor, wherein:

said image compressor reads, in response to a readout command sent from said controller, the digital

data from said frame buffer and compresses the digital data; and

said controller controls the readout command to thereby control an amount of data per unitary time of the digital data.

33. (Amended) A surveillance system according to claim 30, further comprising input means for requesting a user of said surveillance system to supply an input indicating whether or not the second recording mode is to be used.

34. (Amended) A surveillance system according to claim 30, further comprising a detecting section for detecting a remaining amount of storage capacity of the recording medium, wherein

said controller is connected to said detecting section, receives a detection result from said detecting section, and automatically uses the second recording mode when the user does not supply an input to said input means before the remaining amount of storage capacity of the recording medium becomes equal to a predetermined value.

35. (Amended) An image compression/decompression system, comprising:

a detecting circuit for subdividing first image information into areas each of which has a predetermined size and for detecting a maximum value of an image change rate per unitary distance for each of the areas;

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a lowpass filter for conducting predetermined filter processing for the first image information in the area having the maximum value exceeding a threshold value; and

a JPEG codec for compressing second image information including the first image information in the area having the maximum value equal to or less than the threshold value and the first image information passed said lowpass filter, by conducting a DCT operation for the second image information.

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36. (Amended) An image compression/decompression system according to claim 35, further comprising a JPEG file processor for writing, in a comment marker, file data including identifier information of the area having the maximum value equal to or more than the threshold value, differential information between the maximum value and the threshold value, and the threshold value information and for thereby creating a JPEG file together with a compressed data string outputted from said JPEG codec.

37. (Amended) An image compression/decompression system according to claim 35, further comprising:

a filter data analyzing circuit for receiving and analyzing the filter data including identifier information of the area having the maximum value equal to or more than the threshold value, differential information between the maximum value and the threshold value, and the threshold value information; and

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a peaking filter for receiving the image information created by said JPEG codec and conducting predetermined filter processing, according to a result of the analysis by said file data analyzing circuit, for the area having the maximum value exceeding the threshold value.

38. (Amended) An image compression/decompression system according to claim 37, wherein said detecting circuit, said lowpass filter, said file data analyzing circuit, and said peaking filter are integrally constructed as one digital signal processor.

39. (Amended) A surveillance system, comprising:

a surveillance camera;

a video decoder connected to said surveillance camera;

an image compression/decompression system connected to said video decoder;

a video encoder connected to said image compression/decompression system; and

a display connected to said video encoder, wherein:

said image compression/decompression system comprises:

an input filter connected to said video decoder;

a JPEG codec connected to said input filter;

and

a JPEG filter processor connected to said

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input filter and said JPEG codec,

said input filter includes:

a detecting circuit for subdividing first image information into areas each of which has a predetermined size and for detecting a maximum value of an image change rate per unitary distance for each of the areas; and

a lowpass filter for conducting predetermined filter processing for the first image information in the area having the maximum value equal to or more than a threshold value,

said JPEG codec compresses second image information including the first image information in the area having the maximum value less than the threshold value and the first image information passed said lowpass filter, by conducting a DCT operation for the second image information, and

said JPEG file processor writes, in a comment marker, file data including identifier information of the area having the maximum value equal to or more than the threshold value, differential information between the maximum value and the threshold value, and the threshold value information, and thereby creates a JPEG file together with a compressed data string outputted from said JPEG codec.

40. (Amended) An automatic setting and update method for system parameters of a surveillance system, comprising:

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the step of making a check to determine whether or not there exists a first system parameter currently being used in the surveillance system and whether or not a second system parameter to be introduced to the surveillance system is younger than the first system parameter;

the step of automatically setting, when it is determined that the first system parameter does not exist in the surveillance system, the second system parameter to the surveillance system by copying the second system parameter thereonto;

the step of automatically updating, when it is determined that the first system parameter exists in the surveillance system and the second system parameter is younger than the first system parameter, the first system parameter to the second system parameter; and

the step of keeping the first system parameter when it is determined that the first system parameter exists in the surveillance system and the first system parameter has a creation day equal to or younger than a creation day of the second system parameter.

41. (Amended) An automatic setting and update method for system parameters in accordance with claim 40, further comprising the step of confirming, before said determining step, identifier (ID) data regarding the second system parameter to be introduced.

42. (Amended) An automatic setting and update method

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for system parameters in accordance with claim 40,
wherein:

the first system parameter includes a flag
for allowing update of the first system parameter;

said method further comprising the step of
making a check to determine whether or not the flag
allows update of the first system parameter; and

said update step includes updating the first
system parameter when it is determined that the flag
allows the update.

43. (Amended) An automatic setting and update method
for system parameters in accordance with claim 40,
wherein:

the first system parameter sets a plurality
of operation environments and includes a flag for
allowing update the first system parameter for each of
the operation environments;

said method further comprising the step of
making a check to determine whether or not the flag
allows update of the first system parameter; and

said update step includes updating the first
system parameter for operation environments for which
it is determined that the flag allows the update of the
first system parameter.

44. (Amended) An automatic setting and update method
for system parameters in accordance with claim 40,
further comprising the step of accessing, before said
determining step, a predetermined address to download

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the second system parameter via a communication line.

45. (Amended) An automatic setting and update method for control programs of a surveillance system, comprising:

the step of making a check to determine whether or not there exists a first control program currently being used in the surveillance system and whether or not a second control program to be introduced to the surveillance system is younger than the first control program;

the step of automatically setting, when it is determined that the first control program does not exist in the surveillance system, the second control program to the surveillance system by copying the second control program thereonto;

the step of automatically updating, when it is determined that the first control program exists in the surveillance system and the second control program is younger than the first control program, the first control program to the second control program; and

the step of keeping the first control program when it is determined that the first control program exists in the surveillance system and the first control program has a creation day equal to or younger than a creation day of the second control program.

46. (Added) An automatic setting and update method for control programs in accordance with claim 45, further comprising the step of confirming, before said

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determining step, identifier (ID) data regarding the second control program to be introduced.

47. (Added) An automatic setting and update method for control programs in accordance with claim 40, further comprising the step of accessing, before said determining step, a predetermined address to download the second control program via a communication line.

48. (Added) A surveillance system, comprising:

a surveillance camera for shooting an object and for outputting an electric analog signal;

a converter section for converting the electric analog signal into a digital signal; and

a controller for recording and editing the digital signal, wherein said controller comprises:

a storage for storing therein system parameters for setting an operation environment of said surveillance system and control programs for controlling said respective sections of said surveillance system; and

a controlling section for controlling automatic setting and update of the system parameters and the control programs.

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ABSTRACT

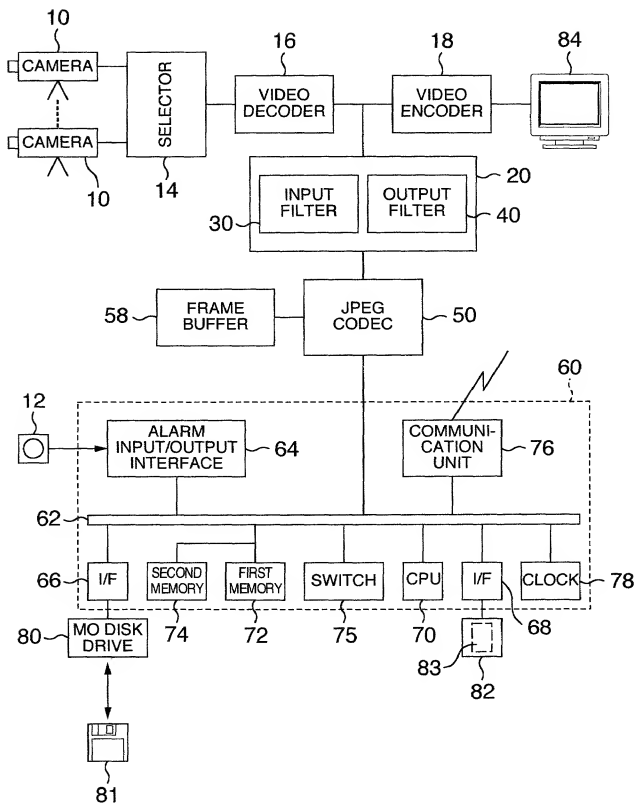
The present invention relates to creation, compression, decompression, and recording of image data and system control and has an exemplary object to provide a surveillance system superior to the surveillance system of the prior art.

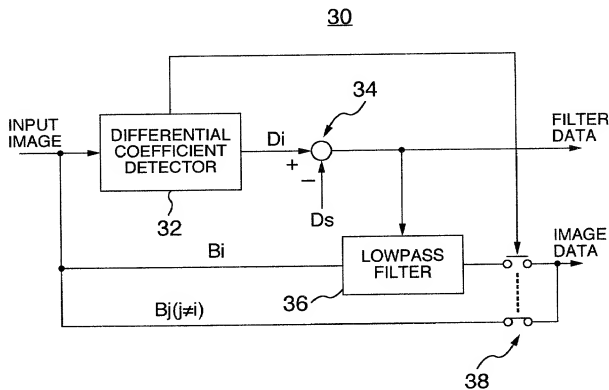
In creation of image data, data assumed to be less important is thinned out by adjusting a capturing command and a compression ratio of a codec. In compression and decompression of image data, a differential coefficient detecting circuit and a lowpass filter are used. To avoid data loss during disk replacement, a fixed disk and a removal disk are used, and system parameters and control programs can be automatically set and updated.

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FIG. 1





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FIG. 4

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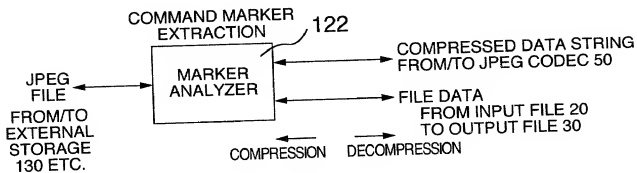


FIG. 5

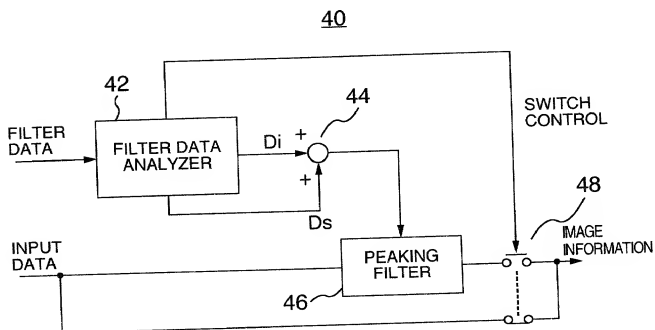


FIG.6

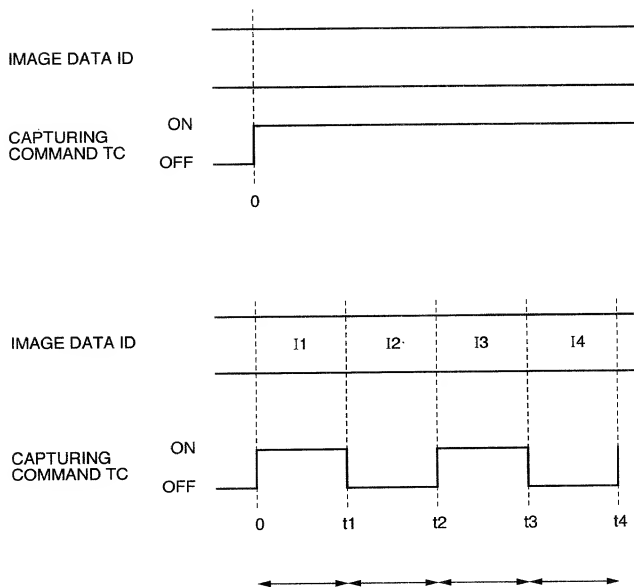
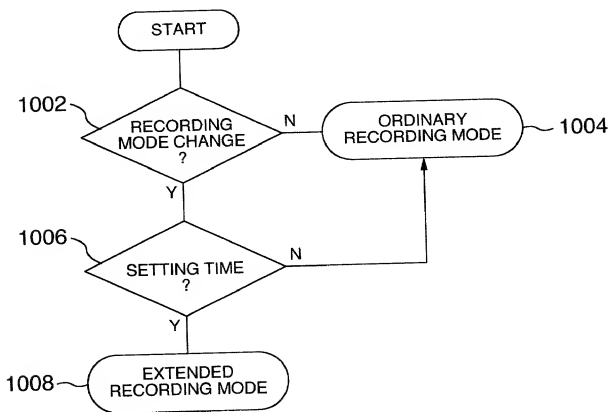


FIG.7



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FIG.8

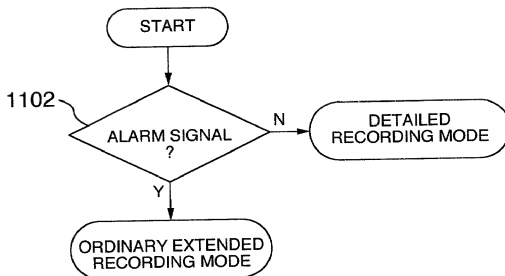


FIG.9

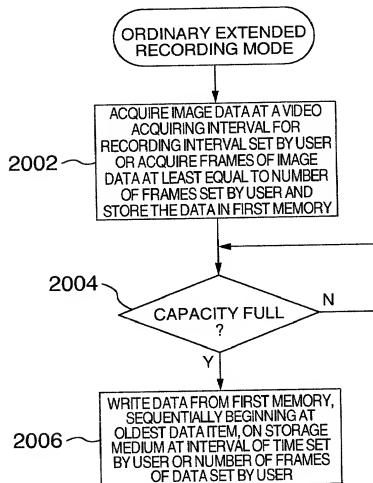


FIG. 10

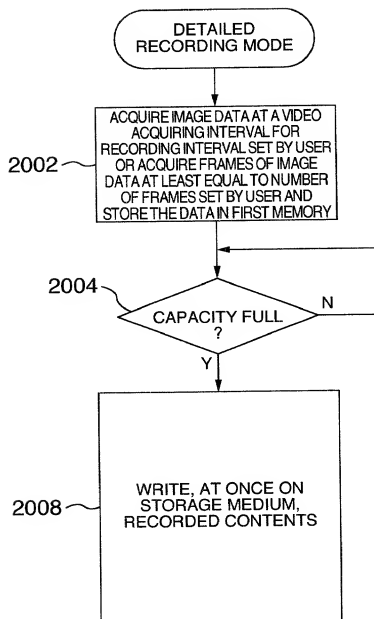
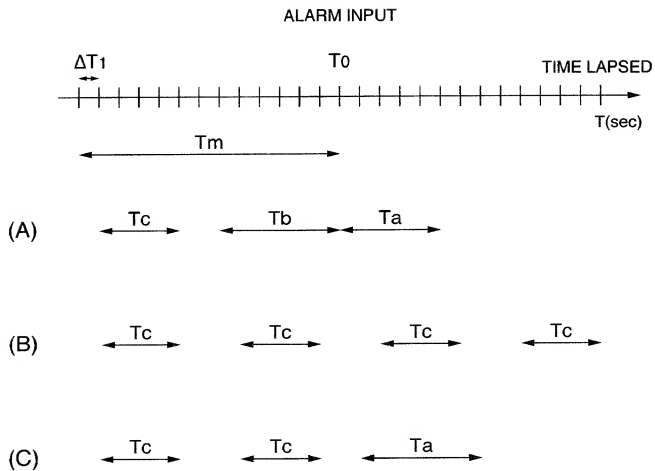
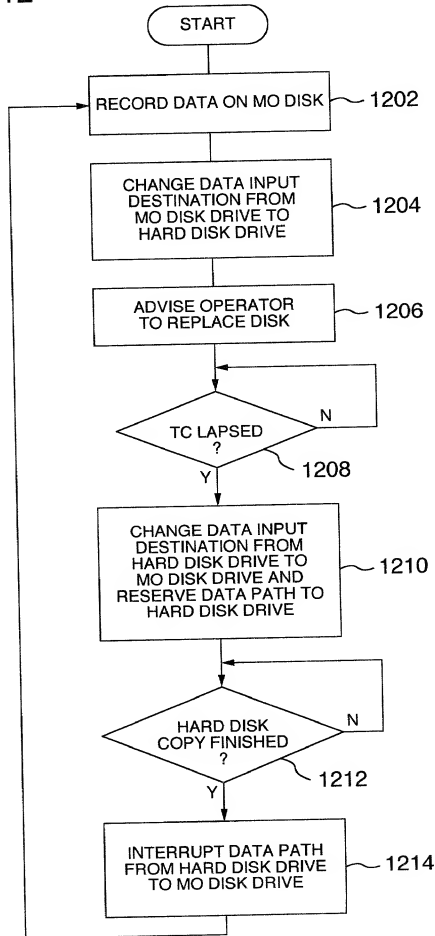


FIG.11



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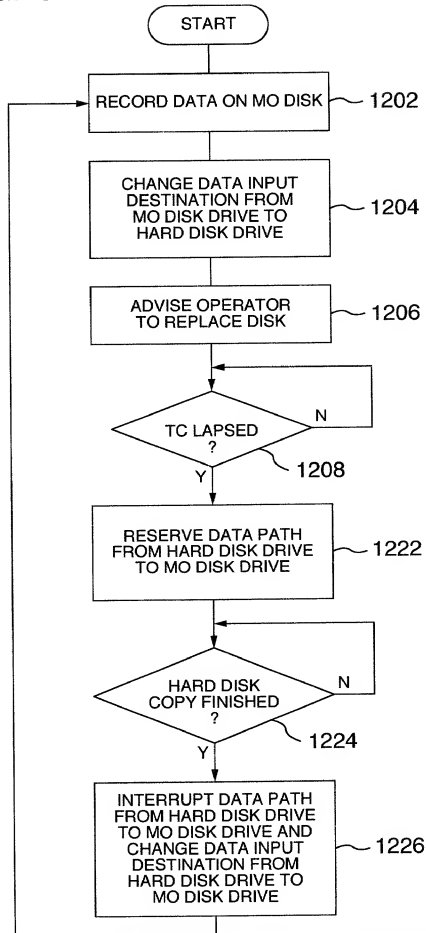
FIG.12



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FIG.13

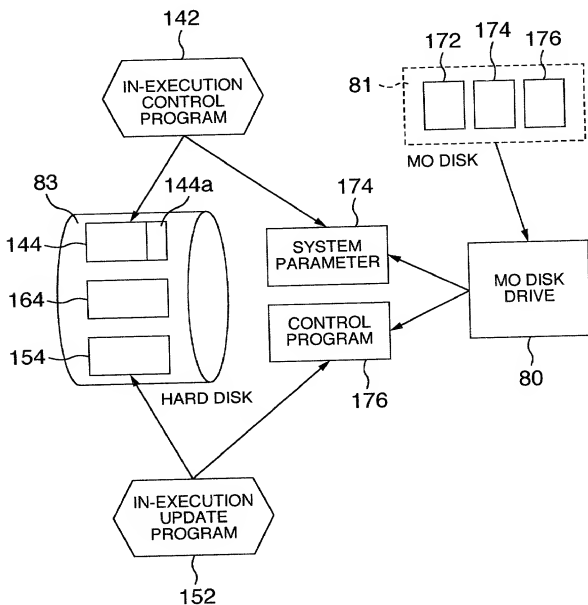
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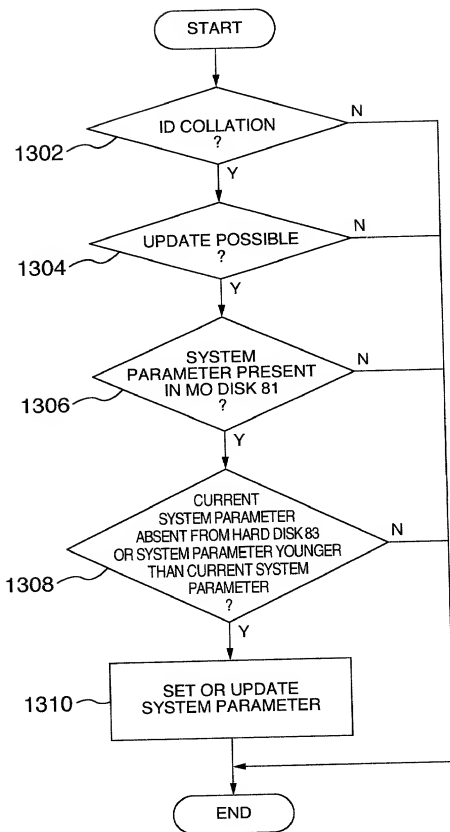
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FIG.14



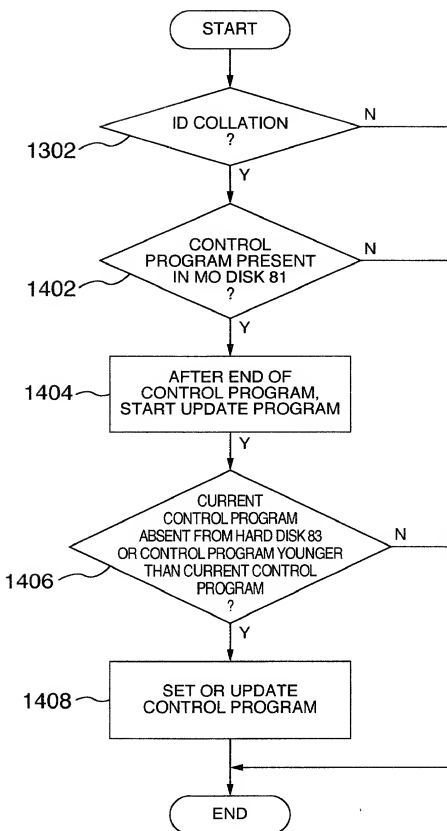
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FIG. 15



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FIG. 16



BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

PLEASE NOTE:
YOU MUST
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FOLLOWING:

COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT AND DESIGN APPLICATIONS

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
0152-0559P

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that: my residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated next to my name; that I verily believe that I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one inventor is named below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural inventors are named below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

Insert Title:

"INFORMATION RECORDING METHOD AND SYSTEM, IMAGE COMPRESSION/DECOMPRESSION SYSTEM, SYSTEM CONTROL METHOD, AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM INCLUDING PART OR ALL OF THEM"

Fill in Appropriate
Information -
For Use Without
Specification
Attached:

the specification of which is attached hereto. If not attached hereto,

the specification was filed on _____ as

United States Application Number _____; and /or

the specification was filed on October 26, 1999 as PCT

International Application Number PCT/JP99/05922; and was

amended under PCT Article 34 March 29, 2000 (if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.

I do not know and do not believe the same was ever known or used in the United States of America before my or our invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my or our invention thereof or more than one year prior to this application, that the same was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to this application, that the invention has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued before the date of this application in any country foreign to the United States of America on an application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months (six months for designs) prior to this application, and that no application for patent or inventor's certificate on this invention has been filed in any country foreign to the United States of America prior to this application by me or my legal representatives or assigns, except as follows.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119 (a)-(d) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Insert Priority
Information:
(if appropriate)

Prior Foreign Application(s)

<u>10-321437</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>Oct. 27, 1998</u>
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)
<u>11-120698</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>April 27, 1999</u>
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)
_____	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)
_____	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)

Priority Claimed

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

Insert Provisional
Application(s):
(if any)

(Application Number)

(Filing Date)

(Application Number)

(Filing Date)

All Foreign Applications, if any, for any Patent or Inventor's Certificate Filed More Than 12 Months (6 Months for Designs) Prior To The Filing Date of This Application:

Insert Requested
Information:
(if appropriate)

Country

Application No.

Date of Filing (Month/Day/Year)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

Insert Prior U.S.
Application(s):
(if any)

(Application Number)

(Filing Date)

(Status - patented, pending, abandoned)

(Application Number)

(Filing Date)

(Status - patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby appoint the following attorneys to prosecute this application and/or an international application based on this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith and in connection with the resulting patent based on instructions received from the entity who first sent the application papers to the attorneys identified below, unless the inventor(s) or assignee provides said attorneys with a written notice to the contrary:

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PLEASE NOTE:
 YOU MUST
 COMPLETE THE
 FOLLOWING:

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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 Insert Date This
 Document is Signed

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 Insert Citizenship

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RESIDENCE (City, State & Country)		CITIZENSHIP	
POST OFFICE ADDRESS (Complete Street Address including City, State & Country)			
GIVEN NAME	FAMILY NAME	INVENTOR'S SIGNATURE	DATE
RESIDENCE (City, State & Country)		CITIZENSHIP	
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